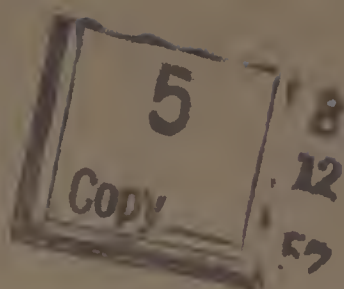


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INTERMARRIAGE AND OTHER DISCOURSES

DELIVERED BEFORE

Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

By

RABBI ABRAHAM J. FELDMAN, B.A.

1921-1922



PHILADELPHIA

OSCAR KLONOWER

1922

Gift of
Oscar Sumner
Washington, D. C.

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CONTENTS

INTERMARRIAGE	I
JUDAISM AND ETHICAL CULTURE.....	13
HAS REFORM JUDAISM FAILED?.....	25
IS THE WORLD GROWING WORSE?.....	37
“TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”.....	49

Intermarriage

A DISCOURSE AT TEMPLE KENESETH ISRAEL.

BY RABBI ABRAHAM J. FELDMAN.

November 27, 1921.

Scripture Lesson: Genesis II:18-24; Ruth I: 1-19.

In the July number of the *Atlantic Monthly* there appeared an article from the pen of one Paul Scott Mowrer entitled *The Assimilation of Israel*. The author of the article, it appears, is the Paris representative of the *Chicago Daily News*. I know nothing of the man's previous acquaintance with or knowledge of Jewish life, tradition or teaching. His article does not betray any such knowledge or acquaintance. The article bears as a superscription, a biblical verse which seems to serve as the author's text and suggests his reasoning and argument. It is from the book of Esther and is Haman's charge: "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples—and their laws are diverse from those of every people." And this is his argument.

Anti-Semitism is growing by leaps and bounds. The Jew is hated and feared. He is attacked in all forums of public expression. Sentiment against him is growing. This Jew-hatred is no longer a matter to be ignored. It is not sporadic. It has become "a true movement of opinion." There is a cause for these persistent manifestations and this cause "is political. It is based," says this man, "on the observation that the Jews, through innumerable transmutations of time and place, not only have kept their identity as a people, but have opposed a vigorous, if passive, resistance to most attempts at assimilation. The Jew, in short, is regarded as a foreigner whose 'laws are diverse from all people,' and as such, he is considered to be an enemy of the State."

After some delving into what is paraded to be Jewish history but which in truth is only the kind of history which is concocted by Ford's underlings of *Dearborn Independent* infamy, he proceeds to tell us that—

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"Though many western European Jews have been more or less assimilated during the last hundred years, there are still many others who, though emancipated so far as external restrictions are concerned, have not desired, or have been unable, to shake off the clannishness, the peculiar mentality, inbred by twenty or thirty centuries of almost unbroken traditions; they may not go to the synagogue, or even to the reformed tabernacle but they would be repelled at the idea of marrying outside the race. . . . Their inner emancipation, their emancipation from the history and customs of Israel, is still to be effected. There can be no true assimilation so long as there is not free inter-marriage; and until there is evidence of a rapidly increasing assimilation, the Jewish question, with its attendant fervor of anti-Semitism, will continue to occupy men's minds."

He, then, proceeds to assail the religious ideals of the Jew. In this, too, he proves himself so unthinkably shallow and Bourbon as to make it laughable were it not for the fact that uninformed people take it to be "gospel truth." By way of example, take this gem of thought—

"Even after they have forsworn their religion completely, a tendency has been remarked among the Jews to cling to the idea, not only that all men are entitled to be happy even in this life (as distinguished from 'some future existence'), but that all men are equal before God. . . . A poor man, imbued with this spirit, and looking about him upon the present world, is inevitably exposed to the temptation of becoming a malcontent or even an agitator."

It seems that there are no depths of hypocrisy too low for some of these people. They stop at nothing, however much they may have to pervert truth, in order to make a point.

Mr. Mowrer then turns to the situation in America and asserts upon his journalistic authority that "the popular (American) nationalistic suspicion (is) that the Jews are willfully resisting assimilation" and issues this threat or warning out of the fullness of his journalistic Americanism—

"Overburdened already with German-Americans whose hearts are in Germany, with Irish-Americans whose hearts are in Ireland, and with numerous other varieties of half-digested foreigners she would like to be able to count at least on the full allegiance of her Jewish citizens, whose record in the war was excellent, and to feel that, however much they may be drawn by a fellow sentiment with distant co-religionists, their hearts, nevertheless, have been definitely surrendered to the land of their election, even to the point—when no imperious religious reasons intervene—of accepting the idea of marriage with non-Jewish fellow citizens."

This, then, is his suggested solution of the Jewish problem—Assimilation through Inter-marriage of Jews with non-Jews. Jewish loyalty to this man is a political loyalty a loyalty to a foreign political organism which no modern State and certainly not the American State can tolerate, should tolerate, or wants to tolerate. It is not, according to him, a loyalty to ideas, to a great spiritual heritage; not a loyalty to God and Faith; it is purely a beastly, material devotion to a law which keeps the Jew distinct, a law, that is diverse from the laws of all other peoples, a political law.

After the reading of his article one realizes that his sin is not only one of commission—in that he makes an ignorant charge, but one of omission as well, for in omitting the rest of the charge of Haman he shows that he lacks even the frankness of Haman. For, says Haman, this people scattered and dispersed, whose laws are diverse from those of other people, "Keep not the king's laws, therefore it profiteth not the king to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they be destroyed." This, precisely, is Mowrer's charge and solution, in part direct, in part insinuated, except that he suggests that the Jew destroy himself ere he is destroyed and crushed by the modern "true movement of opinion," as he pleases to call anti-Semitism.

Last October another voice was heard. This time not the voice of a journalist, but the voice of a scientist, the voice of one who has made a life study of anthropology, the science of man's development, of the effect of environment upon racial groups, the voice of Dr. Maurice Fishberg, a Jew by birth, and the author of a renowned work called "The Jews: A Study of Race and Environment." Speaking at the recent International Congress of Eugenics, he said, according to newspaper reports:

"When we contemplate that the Jews constitute much less than one-fourth of one per cent. of white humanity, and then observe the enormous number of great and talented men and women among them, it is clear, fusion with them can only prove beneficial. The only losers appear to be the Jews, because the best from among them are thus diverted into other groups."

These two in addition to minor voices heard frequently urging intermarriage between Jew and Christian; these and the not uncommon occurrence of such mixed mar-

riages deserve a statement from the Jewish pulpit, a statement that would inform Christians of their misunderstanding of the Jewish position, as well as Jews, especially young Jews, who ask to be informed of the modern Jewish attitude towards this problem.

Let it be understood at the very outset that authoritative, recognized Jewish law has at no time in the course of its development, and never in the history of the Jew opposed intermarriage on the ground of racial superiority. Rather is the reverse true. Through the dark days of mediævalism it was the Jew who was considered inferior racially. Through the various interdictions by Christianity of marriage between Jew and Christian, from the days Constantius in 339 when such intermarriage brought the penalty of death, through the bans by various Church Councils and the edicts of mediæval kings in the various lands of Jewish domicile prohibiting such unions, Christendom thought of the Jew as a being that was hardly human. Conjugal union with Jew or Jewish was considered unnatural, and unthinkable, and contact with the Jew was adjudged contaminating, whether the contact was commercial or social or marital. The Jew, however, never thought of himself as being humanly, racially better than others. He resented the charge of inferiority, but he proclaimed human equality, in the spirit of Israel's prophetic son who said: "Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us all?"

If the Jew has opposed intermarriage, and he has opposed it, it was always because of the fear expressed in the Bible that such marriages might turn away the son of Israel (or the daughter of Israel) from following the teachings of the God of Israel, because it threatened not the Jewish "solidarity" of which Mowrer speaks, but loyalty to Judaism, to the faith, to the religion of the Jew, because it endangered Israel's existence as the servant of God, as a people, to be sure, but a people living not merely for the sake of living, and continuing not only because of the sheer accident of its being, but a people with a task divinely assigned to it of yore, a task as yet unfulfilled, an obligation from which he has never been discharged.

It has been pointed out numerous times that there were periods in Jewish history when intermarriage was common and frequent. The patriarchs, Abraham and Jacob, took to concubines their wives' servants, Joseph married an

Egyptian woman, Moses, before he became the redeemer of Israel, married Zipporah, the Midianitish woman, Samson married Delilah the Philistine woman, David married a Geshurite woman, Solomon married many foreign women, and the exiles to Babylon married so many foreign women that it became necessary for Ezra and Nehemiah, the leaders of the restored Palestinian community, to issue a ban against such marriages and to urge separation or divorce.

Intermarriage must have been common to some extent during the early Christian centuries, else would the Church Councils and Christian emperors not resorted to a death penalty to stop these. These edicts effectively checked intermarriage through the Middle Ages. With the emancipation of the Jews in modern times, when civil and political rights were given the Jews, there was a weakening of the religious life of the Jew and apostasy and intermarriage became frequent. It became less infrequent also for another reason. Education became more universal and Jewish children came into closer contact with non-Jewish children. From adolescent infatuations to the flame of true love is but a step, and when love played its tuneful harmony, and the symphony of the heart sounded its bewitching melodies, faith, traditions, customs were often of no avail. For when the voice of love speaks the call of loyalty to abstract ideals is unheard, and the summons of loyalty to tradition and traditional obligations falls on deaf ears when youth and maiden see no one but each other, hear no one, are conscious of nothing else but of the imperious urge of youthful love.

But be it remembered that throughout history intermarriage was looked upon with disfavor and disapproval both by synagogue and church, and the disapproval of the synagogue in particular was not at all due to the thought of any racial superiority. There is not a race on earth that can claim absolute racial purity. Some are purer than others, some have a greater admixture of alien blood than others. Purely racial groups such as the Celts, the Gauls, the Teutons, can in modern society have no reason for objecting to the intermarriage of the races. They may even have much to gain and very little to lose. They can intermarry without violating any religious sanction. But the Jews constitute more than a mere race. They are a religious brotherhood, a religious fraternity. And where the

religious element enters in, marriage is not and cannot be what Dr. Fishberg and his eugenistic confreres consider it to be. It is not merely a matter of physical union, for breeding purposes. Humans are not cattle. The difference between animal and man lies in the possession of a soul, of intelligence, of æsthetic tastes, of a God-consciousness, of mystic propensities and emotions. And it is this difference that has made for man's development from the lower stages to the higher, as his soul developed, and as he grew in intellectual power, as he learned to interpret his own observations as well as the experience of the race, as he advanced from the barnyard marriage through the stages of polygamy and polyandry to the high estate of the present monogamous marriage. And he has learned by experience that marriage is not merely a union of the flesh, but a union of spirits, a communion of souls.

"It is not a question of single, kindly acts," says Prof. Lazarus in his great work "The Ethics of Judaism," "nor of services rendered and favors received. The idea is that both husband and wife are to be changed spiritually, purged, exalted, so that in their way and sphere, they may accomplish, through their marriage, the ultimate purpose of all morality, the close joining of souls to make a spiritual unit."

This is the Jewish ideal of marriage. Not a theoretical ideal, not an abstract rule of ethics, but an ideal that has been lived, that has been realized, an ideal to the fulfilment of which a world is witness and all literature bears testimony. Those who know the history of the Jew and have looked into the secret of the Jew's persistence in the face of the most determined efforts to annihilate him, know that it was the Jewish home, with its idealism, its undivided loyalty, its spirituality, that has been the cause of this miracle of a minority's preservation. Marriage to the Jew is a divine institution no less than a social contract, and perfect union and harmony between husband and wife must prevail ere it can be a true marriage. Husband and wife must be as one, in interests, in affection, in service. "Therefore does man leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife and they become as one being"—this is the magnificent biblical conception of marriage. This sums up the Jewish ideal of marriage.

Now, is this ideal realized in the mixed marriage? When Jew and non-Jew intermarry, do they become as one

being? In rare cases, in very rare cases, yes. But in the great majority of cases—no. It is but natural. When we remember that all of us are products of our environment, that to it we owe not only many of our physical characteristics, but also conceptions of truth and God, that in our native environment we receive our inevitable racial and religious prejudices, that however indifferent we may become to the religion of our fathers, the views of those fathers have by the time we have reached maturity colored our life, have influenced our attitude, towards other people as well as our conceptions of right and wrong, have moulded our habits of thought and life, and have established for us our social contacts and friendships—we can well realize that no civil contract, nor religious formula can eradicate or undo these. We may succeed in submerging these for a time—we cannot remove them entirely. Love in its early blush of ardor may crowd them out, may screen or hide all these things gotten from our fathers, but they do come to the surface again and again. And when they do, then is there no longer a spiritual unity possible, even as their very coming to the surface reveals a previous state of disunion, and pain, and suffering, and humiliation, and struggle, and tragedy. And where there is disunion and disharmony there are husband and wife no longer as one being—and the ideal of marriage is shattered, shattered sometimes, alas!, beyond the possibility of resurrection.

And we must remember also, that our homes constitute our earliest society. We are born into that society. Until we are self-sustaining we are seldom out of the sphere of that society's influence, and very often not even then. The home's influence penetrates our lives through a myriad impressions and through a countless number of channels. The customs and traditions of home, the thoughts there regnant, the words there spoken, the atmosphere that surrounds us there, the events that transpire there, the community of interests and affections there created, of likes and dislikes, of beliefs and preferences—these become the treasury of childhood memories which remains with us for life, and which we cannot obliterate.

Now, then, bring into a home a husband or wife, coming from a similar type of home, where a similar environment and atmosphere influenced life and thought, and there

is every reasonable possibility of happiness and harmony. But bring some one from an entirely different type of home, some one whose training, whose religious ideals have been entirely different, and a factor is introduced that cannot be ignored, that must create friction, aggravation, humiliation, and a situation is created that makes spiritual union and the ideal married state, except in very rare cases, well-nigh impossible.

For, you see, when we speak of mixed marriages we mean not that union where, let us say, the non-Jew embraces Judaism before marriage. That is then not intermarriage. For then Jew marries Jew, and even according to the most orthodox Jewish law the proselyte is a Jew religiously and has the same privileges even in the most sacred and significant moments of Jewish life as is the one who is born a Jew. Where as a result of study and conviction the ancestral faith is forsaken and the other faith is embraced, the most serious disturbing factor is eliminated. Social differences there may be then—but these may be adjusted. But religious convictions, rooted as they are in the emotions, are less easily adjusted, and where the marriage is blessed with children adjustment is impossible without the serious violation of the feelings, the sentiments, the emotions of the one or the other parent. In such a state what is the religious heritage of the child? Considering that religion for the child is entirely a matter of example set by parents, what is the possible condition of the religious views of the child reared in such a divided home?

An experience I had only five months after my ordination will, I think, clarify the point. A member of my congregation who had married out of the faith, came to me with a problem and asked for my advice. I gave him my opinion, but to be certain of the correctness of my attitude I wrote to Dr. Kaufmann Kohler, then president of the Hebrew Union College, stated the situation and my opinion, and asked for his opinion. My letter to him and his reply were by him reported to the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Permit me to read this correspondence to you,*

*Yearbook C. C. A. R., vol. xxix, p. 76 f.

"A member of my congregation," I wrote, "approached me with the following difficulty. His wife was a Christian (Methodist), and a New York Rabbi married them. The woman is now expecting a child, and the man wanted me to advise him in what faith the expected child is to be reared. His wife never accepted Judaism. Her mother is a strict Methodist; his mother is a Jewess, and each wants the child reared in her respective faith. I have made inquiry of the New York Rabbi who married them, and he assures me that he never married a couple under such circumstances without getting the promise of the alien party to rear the children in the Jewish faith, and to study (by himself or herself) some guide to Jewish instruction. He also tells me that they abjure their old faith in his presence and promise to cast their lot in with our people. He remembers marrying this couple and is certain that he exacted such a promise from this woman. (This Rabbi does not go through the formality of issuing a paper of conversion in the presence of witnesses.)

"I feel that I would not be justified in saying that the child should be reared as a Jew, if the mother is and intends to remain a Christian. It would be dividing the home, and the child would hardly be Jewish. It would be mockery and hypocrisy. On the other hand, how could I, a Jewish teacher, tell the parents to raise the child a Christian? I feel, if the child is to be reared in our faith, that the mother must cease to be a Christian. If the child is to be reared in the Christian faith, the father cannot remain a Jew without—in later years—taking the consequence of having children who would mock and scoff and deride him. If this is not a certainty, it is, to say the least, a possibility or a probability. Again, then, how can I, how dare I, advise this man who wants to remain a Jew (or he would not belong to a congregation and be a frequent attendant at services), to change his faith? I will, of course, urge the mother to become a Jewess. But if she refuses, what shall my advice be?"

"The Jewish law," Professor Kohler replied, "declares that the child of a non-Jew has its character determined by the mother. The Christian wife of your member should, therefore, be persuaded as far as possible, especially for the sake of the husband who wants to have a Jewish home, to become a Jewess in order to have her child born as a Jew. Of course, when raised as a Jew (in the event of the non-conversion of the mother), the child could afterward through Confirmation be adopted into the Jewish fold like any proselyte. On the other hand, it must be stated that the Rabbi who solemnized the marriage of a Jew to a non-Jewess did not act in conformity with the Jewish law. . . . Mixed marriages belong before the civil magistrate who is to give them legal sanction. The Jewish religion cannot consecrate a home divided by two different creeds, as you well state."

I communicated this opinion to the husband, and when the child was born, a daughter, the Methodist branch of the household won the day.

These, friends, are some of the factors that enter into the determination of the Jewish position on intermarriage. Those mentioned heretofore concerned primarily the lives of the contracting parties. But Judaism represents an in-

terpretation of life, a point of view shared by a community of people. Convinced as we are of the rightness and righteousness of our cause, conscious as we are of the tremendous obligation resting upon us to remain true to truth, to remain faithful to our superb heritage, aware as we are of our spiritual task and mission, and concerned as we must be with the preservation of Jew and Judaism, dare we do aught else but interdict and discourage marriages of sons or daughters of Israel with those whose faith is not ours, whose teachings are not ours, whose religious message has not yet reached the sublime heights of Judaism?

Were Judaism to permit intermarriage, Jews and Judaism in the course of a few numbered generations would cease to be. To preserve these, Judaism must insist upon religious separateness and distinctiveness. As it has been so well put by my teacher, Prof. Jacob Z. Lauterbach, of the Hebrew Union College, in his recent magnificent essay on "The Attitude of the Jew towards the Non-Jew,"

"Judaism insists upon the religious separateness of the Jew from other people not because of hatred or contempt for the rest of humanity, but on the contrary, out of love for humanity. . . . It imposes upon them special historic obligations, prescribes for them special rituals, and religious institutions, demands of them that they preserve their identity and maintain their unique character by being loyal to their sacred traditions and by cherishing and cultivating their great spiritual heritage, in order that they may be the better fitted for achieving the special task assigned to them in the economy of nations.

"This task is to become a blessing unto all the families of the earth and to benefit humanity. The Jew must therefore avoid anything that might impair his usefulness in that direction or hinder him in the accomplishment of his noble task. . . . In other words, the Jew must be separatistic in order to be truly universalistic. His separateness is not an end in itself, but merely a means to an end. . . . The universalistic tendency gives the fundamental tone to all Jewish religious literature, it echoes from all the Jewish liturgy, it forms the special theme of the choicest prayers recited by the Jews on the most solemn occasions; it has always been, and still is, the hope and the aspiration of every Jew, no matter to what group or party he may belong."

Thus, chosen not for special kindness, nor for special privileges, but for service, and that service not to self but to mankind, to the world, having gone through, as the Jew has, the baptism of both fire and water, literally as well as figuratively, crucified upon a thousand crosses, crowned with the diadem of martyrdom for Truth, for Faith, for Ideals, for

God, and believing as we do in our destiny and mission, how can we even consider Fishberg's cattle-breeding theories, or be affrighted by Mowrer's Hamanism with his threats of persecution and destruction?

If there is a science of patient suffering, then is the Jew an adept in it. If there is an art of suffering martyrdom for convictions, then is the Jew a master of it.

I, for one, friends, would not be opposed to mixed marriages, modern Judaism, I believe, would not oppose these, as it does, were we assured, could we be certain, that the children of mixed marriages would be reared and trained as Jews. Then would Judaism not lose, it might even become the gainer, and the world would gain through Israel's gain. But when statistics, gathered not by official Jewish sources but by governments, and accepted even by Dr. Fishberg in proof of the assimilability of the Jew, prove that between seventy-five per cent. and eighty-five per cent. of children born of mixed marriages are lost to Judaism—think of it!—and are brought up in the dominant Faith, shall Judaism, if it be worthy of itself, of its past achievements and of its future hope, if it is not, indeed, to become what Sargent pictured the Synagogue (the organized expression of Judaism) as being, a broken, dishevelled woman tottering on her throne, her crown fallen, her sceptre broken, because of having failed to show that strength and courage which would have assured her life—shall Judaism sanction intermarriage thus signing her own death warrant, and as the great David Einhorn said, “furnish a nail to the coffin of the small Jewish race, with its sublime mission”?

This is the situation confronting us when we contemplate this question, and it was these considerations that on November 16, 1909, prompted the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the association of the Reform Rabbis of America, to adopt this resolution:

“The Central Conference of American Rabbis declares that mixed marriages are contrary to the tradition of the Jewish religion and should therefore be discouraged by the American Rabbinate.”

The wording of the resolution is such as to leave it with the conscience of the individual Rabbis to officiate at mixed marriage when circumstances arise where conversion is inadvisable, and there is a reasonable certainty that Juda-

ism would not lose thereby. This resolution still stands as the opinion of the Reform Rabbinate of America.

This, then, is the attitude of modern Judaism towards the problem of intermarriage. We do not favor it, we do not approve of it, we do not sanction it. Not because we think ourselves better than others. We do not. Not because we are blind to the tenderness and the beauty and the significance of love. We are not blind to these. We discourage mixed marriages because the ideal marriage must constitute a spiritual union, and where faiths are different and continue to be different even after marriage, there is no spiritual union possible. We discourage it, because a religious minority mixed marriages threaten our existence, because the encouragement of mixed marriages would mean Judaism's disappearance, a fact which when established would mean an indescribable loss to humanity, to religion in general.

We welcome those who would enter the Jewish home, who would come into Jewish life, we welcome them cordially, sincerely. But they must come as Ruth, of the biblical story came, to become of us, soul of our soul, spirit of our spirit, as our co-religionists, prepared to share with us our fate, our destiny, to serve with us, and to suffer with us, if need be; to be of us, ready, as Ruth was, to sacrifice for her new conviction, with the steadfastness of Ruth who said:

“Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”

Judaism and Ethical Culture

A DISCOURSE AT TEMPLE KENESETH ISRAEL.

By RABBI ABRAHAM J. FELDMAN.

Philadelphia, December 25, 1921.

In the November (1921) issue of *The Standard*, the official organ of the Ethical Culture Society, there appears an article by Dr. Henry Neumann, one of the leading spirits of the Ethical Movement in America, entitled: *What Does the Ethical Movement Say About Judaism?* This article, originally an address delivered by Dr. Neumann before the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture, of which he is the leader, is but another attempt often made by other lecturers of the Ethical Movement to point out the superiority of Ethical Culture to Judaism.

It summarizes very definitely the position and attitude of Ethical Culture towards Religion in general and Judaism in particular. And although every lecturer and writer of the Society is careful to repeat what is tantamount to a dogma that he is voicing only his own opinions, and that these opinions are not to be saddled upon the Ethical Culture Societies, a careful reading and study of the opinions of most of them reveal a remarkable unanimity.

I have read and studied the available literature on the subject, from Professor Felix Adler's *magnum opus*—"An Ethical Philosophy of Life," through numerous pamphlets, addresses and articles, and their magazine, and I believe that I am justified in saying that insofar as the Ethical Culture Society assumes an attitude of superiority towards Judaism it has yet to prove its thesis, and to defend its attitude when measured by the facts and emphases of modern Judaism, particularly that "Liberal Judaism" which Dr. Neumann in this published address misunderstands or misrepresents.

When a few years ago a leading American Rabbi characterized the Ethical Culture Society as "a synagogue without God," Dr. Felix Adler's reply in the public press was,

that the day has passed when there was need for the kind of discussion which the Rabbi's characterization challenged. That may be so. But when in every exposition of the Ethical Culture Movement statements are made such as Dr. Adler makes in his books, as Dr. Neumann and Dr. Martin and their associates make in their addresses and writings, and when especially many of our people are attracted by the unrefuted statements, I believe that an answer is due, an answer that shall be as emphatic as the claims of the Ethical Movement with reference to Judaism, are unfounded and unjustified.

Ere I state a single argument, however, I would have you understand my motive and attitude. There is much vagueness existing among Jews and non-Jews about the content of Judaism, its message and its hope. There is, too, much misinformation being spread broadcast concerning the Jew and Judaism. Most of it is so formulated as to beguile the uninformed and the little-informed. A catchword, an attractive motto, a euphonious phrase is sounded, and many in Israel's ranks, many who crave the designations of "modern" and "liberal," readily "take it up"—I believe this is the current phrase—with that zeal, that extreme fervor which are so characteristic of the high-strung Jew. I conceive it as the supreme function of a Jewish teacher to teach and to interpret *Judaism*, and the duty of the modern Jewish teacher it is to reinterpret in the light of the advancement and progress of a new day the ancient teachings of the Jew. It is his sacred duty to fortify his people whose teacher he is, to strengthen them in their convictions, to give to them the results of that training and study which are his life's work, and which the people, for reasons into which we need not enter now, do not or cannot receive elsewhere.

Hence my choice of this particular theme for this morning's instruction. My attitude is one of high regard for the sincere convictions of others. I have a profound respect for Professor Felix Adler, the founder and head of the Ethical Culture Society, and I pay here high and unstinting tribute to his life of noble service, of idealism, of genuine achievement. There is no doubt but that the American community is the better for his life and the richer for his service.

In paying this well-merited tribute, however, it does not necessarily follow that one therefore subscribes to Dr. Adler's opinions, or yields the right to examine them in the

light of history and reason, and to differ from him. When recently Rabbi Krauskopf joined the Catholics of this city in honoring their new Cardinal, or on a previous occasion voiced the admiration of our entire community for Cardinal Mercier, the heroic Belgian prelate, no one in his senses could have interpreted the Rabbi's tribute to character and service as a surrender on his part of the teachings of the Jew.

My attitude is one of human respect and recognition of service rendered to humanity. But it is also an attitude of frank and honest criticism of the teachings and claims of those who are the responsible leaders and lecturers of the Ethical Culture Society. We are not dealing with persons but with ideas. Love and respect them as we might and do, they, of all, would be the last to deny Judaism the right or opportunity to be heard in refutation or rebuttal.

Dr. Neumann in his article says:

"Some people suppose that the chief interest of the Ethical Movement is to attack Judaism and Christianity and to draw people away from these ancestral associations. This is not our purpose even though the majority of our members have left the religious homes of their fathers. We think we have something better to offer."

A Jew by birth, like the founder of the Society, he, like the founder, has forsaken Judaism. He recognizes, however, "the debt we owe to the past." He realizes that Judaism "still" has much "to challenge our admiration." He knows that Judaism—through Christianity—has conquered "the entire Western world," and that it conquered not with swords, not with weapons "forged of steel." "They were the weapons of an intense moral earnestness." The Jew conquered by his ideals, and

"the leading Jewish ideals were justice, tenderness, piety, mercy. These people looked out upon the world and saw how king after king had mounted to power upon the ruin of weaker neighbors. They saw men brutalized under the lust for glory and material might. They said in their day of sorrow that the greatest among men was he who would take upon himself not power but suffering for the sake of his people. . . . Such was Israel's conception of greatness. Our own age, tempted to indulge in dreams of size and martial prowess and to look with envious awe upon the qualities which brought power to the Babylonian, to the Greek and the Roman conquerors, may well ponder the wiser words of the Jewish sages: 'Righteousness exalteth a nation,' 'in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.'"

He points out, and correctly, that "the leading motive in Judaism is expressed in Leviticus xix" (which I have

read to you). It is the *motif* of holiness in the sense of Righteousness, holiness as Duty, holiness as a standard of conduct. It was not an abstract ideal of Duty, for it found expression in

“duties of justice and mercy toward the aged and the young, toward brother and sister, parent, neighbor, alien. They had duties toward the afflicted. There were duties to the poor. There were duties to those whom you might prefer to hate and to treat as they had treated you. . . . In every situation, whether joyous or sad, in every relationship the Jew is taught, there are certain right things that must be done; learn what these are and do them.”

And he concludes his résumé of Judaism's ethical teachings with this eloquent passage:

“All honor to their wisdom! It is right that outworn teachings should be discarded; but when will mankind outgrow the need for justice and mercy, for truthful lips and the clean heart? . . . Before we reject completely the teachings of the fathers, let us ask ourselves whether we can at least be as earnest as they about the things of everlasting value. In our eagerness to be wholly modern, may we not be in danger of missing a certain greatness in life which their religion taught them to see?”

But despite all these merits, the Ethical Culture Society “has something better to offer,” we are told. And this “something better” consists of what?

An examination of the literature of the Ethical Movement reveals an interesting array of claims. It is claimed, in the first place, that Judaism is concerned primarily with the past and not with the future, and this despite the fact that Israel looks ever forward to the coming of the day of prophetic fulfillment. It is claimed that while Judaism has a moral, an ethical content, that content is negative rather than positive; its emphasis is not “We Ought,” “We Must,” but “Thou shalt not,” forgetting the injunction “to do justice, to love mercy, to walk humbly,” quoting, but remaining unmindful of the positive significance of the mandate “Learn to do good, set the oppressed free,” forgetful that even the negative “Thou shalt not kill,” enjoins men to preserve life, to revere it and to protect it. It is claimed that Judaism emphasizes prayer as against the deed, choosing to forget at the same time the prophetic words:

“When ye make many prayers,
I will not hear;
Wash you, make you clean,
Cease to do evil;
Learn to do well;
Seek justice, relieve the oppressed,
Judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” Isaiah i: 15-17.

It is claimed that Judaism fails to recognize the discoveries of science, forgetting that modern Judaism is keeping abreast of science and accepts all that has been scientifically established and proven, and adapts itself to these discoveries of Divine Law. And in the same breath with these we are patted on the back, as it were, and told that the good that we do have in Judaism, "a certain ethical perception and joined with it a certain passionate eagerness to live as that perception requires," that these are "a truth of science," that "the real heart of your religion is in accord with modern science," that Judaism's message is a social message. Let the Jew, therefore, cease to isolate himself, let him "keep the heart of his religion, but do not imagine for a moment that that consists in observing certain rites, or in keeping certain days, or in making prayers, or in monotheism, or in anything that the clear light of science casts a doubt upon."*

We are told also that Christianity, unlike Judaism, bears "hope for the world, the picture of a time when justice and equity and love will actually rule." We are told that the vision of Jesus was "of a time when wrong and hatred would have vanished from the world, when all would love and be loved—when all other elements in society would be restrained or destroyed," that this vision of Jesus, mind you, not of Isaiah, "gave to early Christianity its peculiar character," and all this in sublime forgetfulness of the second chapter of Isaiah and the fourth chapter of Micah, where we are given Israel's vision of peace and security "in the end of days," (and yet, it is said, Israel has no forward look!), oblivious to the eleventh and sixty-fifth chapters of Isaiah where the vision is not only of man but even of the beasts of nature coming under the divine sway of the ideal fulfillment!

What is that "something better" that Ethical Culture has to offer, and on which account Jews are to forsake Judaism for the betterment of humanity? Dr. Neumann tells us, and his are also the reasons given by Dr. Adler for his forsaking Judaism when at the age of twenty-two.

In the first place, he claims Judaism is an ancestral faith; it is largely "a matter of accident," the accident of being born into and of a race the members of which share

*W. M. Salter: "Ethical Culture: Its Message to Jew, Christian and Unbeliever."

a certain religious conviction and constitute a religious fellowship. This is all wrong says Dr. Neumann. "A man's religion is something which he chooses, and his choice must represent a genuine conviction." And so, the Ethical Culture Society "has something better to offer," for in it one can choose one's religious convictions. Let us see how near to truth that is.

Were the Ethical Society merely a sort of lecture forum, like our "Philadelphia Forum," or a sort of University Extension Society, we might conceive of freedom of choice, or of the lack of conscious direction to a choice. But the Ethical Society is more than that. Its leaders claim for it a *religious* conception, and we have it on the authority of no less a person than Dr. Adler that "we *are* a religious society, we bury the dead, we consecrate the marriage bond, we support a Sunday school."† Instead of Baptism there is a naming ceremony. "There should be a special breviary for the sick, a Book of Consolation for the bereaved, . . . a book of direction for those who pass through the experience of sin, and a book of preparation for those who face the end."‡ But apart from these forms, is not the child of parents who are members of the Ethical Culture Religion just as surely influenced and guided into the acceptance of the convictions of its parents, in the Society's Sunday School, as is the Jewish child guided in the Jewish Religious School, or the Christian child in the Christian Sunday School? Does Dr. Neumann mean to say that the influence of the Sunday School over which he presides or his representative is less potent, less conviction-affirming, less character-moulding than is the Religious School of the Jewish Congregation? And if it is not less effective, then wherein is the difference between the unchosen religion of one who came to it through the accident of birth in a loyally Jewish home and the "genuine conviction" of one who just as accidentally was born into the home of those, who, having chosen Ethical Culture, rear their children in their new conviction? The child chooses its faith as little in the latter case as in the former, and the results of the training in the Sunday Schools of the Ethical So-

†F. Adler: "The Religion of Duty," p. 200.

‡F. Adler: "An Ethical Philosophy of Life," p. 353. W. M. Salter: "Ethical Culture: Its Message to Jew, Christian and Unbeliever," p. 37.

ciety is not at all different from the results which we attain in our own Religious School.

In one paragraph he refuses to have our "forbears fix for all time what we shall think about the ultimate problems of life and destiny," and in the next he agrees that Judaism is not a static orthodoxy, living in the past, refusing to go along with the times, but points out how marked Israel's religious development has been through the ages. In the paragraph immediately following, however, he forgets again about the evolution of Judaism and argues that we cannot take the ethical ideals of Judaism out of it and forget about the crude belief of earlier days, insisting, in a superior sort of manner, that we must take the oldest and the latest together, the crude and the refined, the elementary and the advanced together in order to determine what Judaism today teaches. The logic of this is not evident, and the fairness of the argument is of doubtful nature.

And again, he objects to Judaism because, as he puts it, "Duty because duty is right is not the Jewish teaching. Judaism says that the moral commandments are counterfeits unless they are stamped, 'Thus saith the Lord.' " I do not know at what age in life Dr. Neumann forsook Judaism, nor how much he learned about Judaism's teachings. There are those who read his article, as there were undoubtedly those in his audience who took his word for it. But what is the truth in the matter? Jewish literature, prophetic and rabbinic, Jewish teachers through the ages, refute emphatically the charge that virtue for virtue's sake, duty for its own sake is alien to Jewish teaching. "Be not like servants who serve their master for the sake of reward; be rather like unto those who serve without the expectation of reward," is sound Jewish teaching, and reveals a conception of Duty which has nothing to equal it in the teachings of Church or Mosque or Ethical Culture Society. "Duty carries its own reward," is another of the teachings of the Jew. But greater than any dictum or profession or teaching, is the *history* of the Jew which Neumann himself admits is a history of suffering for the sake of the ideal of righteousness, a history that portrays a passion for justice, a yearning for love. The *life* of the Jew reveals the meaning of ethical idealism, of moral fervor, of devotion to a standard of conduct such as no mere Ethical Society could implant, for the very reason that the Jew found his moral inspiration,

his ethical power in that very "Thus saith the Lord" which Neumann, and Martin, and Adler, and Sheldon, and Salter abhor and reject.

They reject Judaism because the God idea is central in Judaism, and to Ethical Culture people "it cannot be such, because the idea of right is even more necessary." That the God idea is central in Judaism, is and has been the Jew's proud boast. But he knows not whereof he speaks, and his motive is to be seriously questioned, when in one paragraph he asserts that Judaism grew out of its early conception of God as a tribal deity, as an over-lord of a geographical locality, into the conception of the Holy One who inhabits Eternity, who bids His children be holy because He is holy, the exemplar of the highest ideals of Justice and Love and Mercy, the God of the Universe, the Supreme Being and Ideal of Moral Perfection, and in another paragraph we find that the reason for the Ethical Society's eliminating God is that His commandments, as found in the Bible, contain the one which says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" and promises the Jews "the satisfaction of seeing the dogs lap the blood of Israel's enemies." I question the motive of a modern educated man who uses such arguments, for the reason that intelligent men know, the youngest college graduate knows, that the Bible is a composite record of the thoughts of many and diverse centuries, that the Bible is itself the finest proof of Israel's moral growth, and that the very greatness of the prophets whom these men acclaim and eulogize so eloquently, is due to the fact that they denounced in unmeasured terms the crude practices of earlier days, and thundered their denunciation of these in the name of that very God who in an earlier age was thought to have promised "the Jews the satisfaction of seeing their dogs lap the blood of Israel's enemies"! I question the sincerity and the earnestness of a man who argues that *everything* in the Bible is accepted and taught by Modern Judaism, irrespective of the adaptations and changes of view necessitated by Israel's moral progress! I question the honesty of motive of one who implies that "an eye for an eye" and "a tooth for a tooth" is still the Jewish standard of Justice, who insinuates that Modern Judaism, and modern Jews, even you and I, advocate the burning of witches, or a belief in them, or that you and I looked forward, or our children are taught to look forward to the

“satisfaction of seeing dogs lap the blood of Isarel’s enemies!”

Ethical Culture, they tell us, enthrones, nay, that is too monarchial a term, *exalts* Duty and Right *above* God, and we are informed also that the belief in monotheism, in the Oneness of God, “is too pure, too empty of content to serve the purposes of a living faith.” But they realize that there must be some motivating force, something “from which the effort for perfection comes.” They tell us that there must be an “Ultimate Being,” a Being that is not the One, the *Ehad* of the prophets, but a “spiritual manifold,” a many-in-one, a Being composed of all of us, a Being that somehow is the source of perfection, but which, unlike Israel’s God, is not a personal, an immanent, a living, vital factor for us.

If that satisfies men and women, I bow in reverence before their conviction. But I maintain then that no ethical man has the right to gainsay the reasonableness of Israel’s *ethical* monotheism, or to question our sincerity and the genuineness of our religious convictions, or to distort Jewish history so as to make it appear devoid of that supreme ethical content which is implied in the prophetic, and therefore Jewish, concept of Holiness as a rule of conduct, and of that constant *Kiddush Hashshem*, the bearing of testimony to the ideal of Holiness through life and living, and when necessary, through self-sacrifice and martyrdom, which has been the most characteristic feature of Judaism and of Jewish history.

They deny God because of the external Authority implied, because the recognition of God as the Supreme Ethical Being implies a recognition also of His authority, and, according to them “Thou shalt” and “Thus saith the Lord” are ethically not justifiable. So say they. Thus are we told,

“even the ‘Ten Commandments,’ that are sometimes spoken of as an epitome of morality, have a theological coloring and a theological basis that free-thinking people cannot assent to. They are all in the name of the ‘Lord thy God.’ They are all his personal commandments, . . . and are the orders of a superior to an inferior. . . . The morality of much in the Ten Commandments is pure and high, but the basis of it is no longer seriously held by thinking people.”*

And yet, the same leader who said this, in speaking of

*W. M. Salter: “The Bible in the Schools,” p. 102.

teaching children to realize the significance of duty, urges the importance of having a child do its duty without the exercise of the pressure of parental authority upon it, but in case the child prove obdurate, then, he informs us,

“‘You shall’ and ‘You shall not’ are forms of speech that have still their legitimate place. Pains and penalties have their place. And they should be as regular as the recurring disobedience, if they are to have any educational value.”

And, furthermore, says this gentleman, if a child asks about God and the facts of life, give him the answer of science when possible. But where the child “presses back for an ultimate explanation of things,” and

“asks what does it all mean, and how does it all come to be, then does he show himself ready for that far flight, the flight to that unknown and unnameable power, which underlies and is the explanation of the whole world of phenomena, from which we in our deepest being come and to which we go. Very willingly would I admit to a child, when the admission is capable of being appreciated and appropriated by him, that there is more and other in the world than what we see, though what this Power or Agency is we can only dimly define to ourselves. Such an admission may not be enough for prayer, and our thought of the constancy of nature’s laws may make prayer out of place; but it is enough for reverence and for a reverent heeding of those laws or conditions of our own life in which the Supreme Power is most immediately and practically revealed to us. Religion in the sense of awe before that which our hands have not made—and which if we disregard no work of our hands can prosper—has still its place.”*

But if God is a fairy tale, the *Aberglaube* of popular theology, a phantasmagoria of unthinking minds, how then does this dim and indefinable, this unknown and unnameable Power or Agency which “is the explanation of the whole world of phenomena, from which we in our deepest being come and to which we go,” this Supreme Power which we are to revere, but to which it were senseless to pray, this Being which Dr. Adler says is so essential for reverence and without which the ethical life is unthinkable, just how is this notion superior to the Jewish conception of a God who teaches men through the divinity implanted within them; teaches them to do justice, to love mercy, to walk humbly; teaches them to be holy even as He is holy; teaches them to love their neighbors as themselves; teaches them to re-

*W. M. Salter: “Children’s Questions: How Shall We Answer Them?” p. 76.

spect and treasure life and to protect it; teaches them to be pure of heart, clean of hand, truthful in speech, honest of intention; teaches them to control their appetites and passions, and to serve Him not merely through prayer, not merely through ritual and lip-profession, but through the loving, the inspired service, the uplifting service rendered to mankind?

They tell us of the futility of prayer. In a universe based on Law, immutable, unchangeable Law, prayer, we are told, can mean nothing. Time will not permit my entering the discussion of the ethical significance, of the inspirational value of the human heart conscious of its divine proximity, aware of its nearness to the Source, the Power, the Ultimate Being, God—call it what you will, of the human heart and soul rising as on wings in fervent, exalted utterance, or in silent devotion and sublime ecstasy, losing itself or becoming merged in the Infinite, or in speechless wonder, reverence and awe when standing in the midst of Nature's majestic revelation, or when suffering as in the presence of death, or when experiencing that unutterable, ineffable joy, which comes with parenthood. All these are forms of prayer. Ethical Culture, however, is concerned only with that religion which will appeal to the intellect, to the mind, forgetting that if man has a mind, so has he also a heart, and emotions, and instincts. And these latter are as important as, yea, more important, methinks, than the former.

And, finally, another objection to Judaism made by Dr. Neumann and Professor Adler, an objection which it seems they do not find to Ethical Culture, is the idea that Israel considers itself a chosen people. To be sure, it is admitted by them that

“the thought of Israel as chosen has its noble meanings, too—for instance that Israel was selected to win from its sorrows the light whereby all earth might walk. It is also true that the Talmud allows a place in heaven for the pious of all faiths. But the thought is written large across every page of Judaism that Israel is singled out to lead. Out of Zion shall the word of the Lord go forth.”

When it is claimed that Ethical Culture has “something better to offer” than does either Judaism or Christianity, when it is asserted that Ethical Culture alone has the “open sesame” for “getting into the unentered rooms of the moral life,” when one realizes how Israel has sacrificed for his

ideals and his vision, and when one considers that at last is mankind awaking to the true significance of Israel's hoary teachings, and is exerting a mighty effort to *attempt* to apply them, Israel can afford to smile benignantly, contentedly, tolerantly, at this latest "objection." For the struggle and the suffering have not been in vain.

I have no doubt, dear friends, that for Dr. Adler and a few of his disciples the "spiritual manifold" has that sublime significance, that compelling urge to noble living which the *Ehad*, the *One* of Israel, has had for saints and martyrs throughout our history. I repeat what I said at the start, that I stand in reverent admiration before the record of Doctor Adler's life and service. But as to the Ethical Society, careful and critical study forces the conclusion that it is, to repeat Dr. Adler's own words, the "Church of the unchurched," and as to the Ethical Movement, that it is the Religion of the Godless. As to the claim that Ethical Culture has "something better to offer" than has Judaism,—well, we might think of it in connection with the assertion ascribed to a German professor that the German translation of Shakespeare is superior to the original; it can be placed in the same class with the claim said to have been made by a certain American professor of Fiction who is innocent of a knowledge of Hebrew, that the King James translation of the Bible is superior to the Hebrew original. All of these claims have equal validity.

“Has Reform Judaism Failed?”

A DISCOURSE AT TEMPLE KENESETH ISRAEL.

By RABBI ABRAHAM J. FELDMAN.

Philadelphia, February 5, 1922.

It was Woodrow Wilson who gave the definition of a conservative: “A conservative,” he said, “is one who just sits and thinks, mostly sits.” And it is this type of conservative that is most afraid of criticism. Criticism is disturbing to the man who chooses merely to sit. Criticism may cause him to think. No cause and no organization that is true to its purpose, no movement that is really a movement, that is not static, that grows, and wishes and desires to grow, rejects criticism;—it welcomes criticism, in fact.

Criticism is wholesome. Criticism is stimulating. Truly, “our antagonist is our helper.” And although criticism it at times painful and unpalatable, it is generally helpful and beneficial in its results.

But there are two kinds of criticism. There is the criticism that is born of hatred and malice, and its purpose is to injure and to slay; and there is another kind of criticism; it is the criticism of a friend, the criticism of one who so loves a cause, is so concerned about the cause being as worthy as possible that he will invoke criticism in order to improve it, in order to strengthen it, in order to have it true and worthy. It is painful to him, even as it is painful for the parent to inflict corporal punishment upon a child; but it is his great love that prompts him to do so. Malevolent criticism, the criticism of the foe and the enemy, we generally can well afford to ignore; but the criticism of a friend, we would do well to examine very carefully, to look into for our good, for the beneficial results that will come to us and to that in which we are interested. Truly speaks the proverb in our biblical book, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” They are for the good of the one criticized; and the reproof and rebuke of a friend have more love, more devotion, more value for us, than have the kisses of a foe.

In the January issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, there appears an article written by a Rabbi, Joel Blau, who is a graduate of the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati, and

therefore a Reform Rabbi. It is a brilliant essay, brilliantly written; it is epigrammatic; the style is fine; it is stimulating; it is thought-provoking; and whether we agree with the author or disagree with him, it is worth reading.

In a very clever and trenchant manner he lays at the door of the non-Jewish world the responsibility for its "mongrelization" of the Jewish type, for the coerced warping and distortion of Jewish individuality, and for those unlovely traits ascribed to the Jew, traits which are inherently alien to the Jew, but which are attributable to an environment which, whatever may be said about it, is certainly not of his own making.

But in addition to the external phases of Jewish life, our author finds upon turning his attention to the inner phase of Jewish life that the inner life of the Jew is appallingly decadent, and concludes that the political emancipation that came to the Jew in the early part of the Nineteenth Century, the civic equality that came to the Jew when the Ghetto Walls fell away and the Jew was permitted to emerge from those walls into the European life and culture,—that this political emancipation, "so far as the Jew is concerned, has failed, and failed miserably." For,

"It took the Jew out of the Ghetto, but it put him nowhere in particular. It snatched him from a dingy milieu of unsplendid isolation, but it made him run amuck in an environment where his best instincts became thwarted and stunted. . . . Political emancipation, indeed, tendered him the cold comforts of civic equality; but it deprived him of the intimacy, the *hominess*, without which legal recognition is but a mockery."

And Reform Judaism, too, which, as we know it, was the result of that emancipation, failed, in that

"it failed to solve the religious aspect of the Jewish problem even as emancipation failed to solve its political aspect.

"Reform Judaism started out with the right diagnosis of the religious ills of Judaism; but it failed to provide the right cure. It realized that Judaism had to purge itself from backward ideas and backward practices; hence it sought to remove what was uncouth in the orthodox service; but in so doing it banished also what was original and distinctive, while it made no essential contribution to religious thought, and failed to kindle a new God-passion in the heart of the modern Jew. The new order brought no new ardor."

Indeed, all that can be said for Reform Judaism is, according to Blau, that it is—

"A lifeless formalism that no one takes very seriously: here and there a pathetic bit of folklore in connection with death—or marriage customs; a little ostentatious charity; all of this scarcely

relieved by the annual visit to the synagogue on the Day of Atonement. It is as if the spirit had long fled the husk. The old words fail to move. The old ideals fail to thrill. And there is no new Sinai from whose thundering top the God of Fathers might speak to his backsliding children."

And when he turns, in despair, to the leaders of Jewry, especially here in America, he discovers that—

"Jewish leadership in America is in the hands of the wealthy laity; but this lay leadership is worldly in character, with no other aim and purpose than to conduct Judaism as a private eleemosynary institution. These rich leaders, indeed, are not wholly to blame; they simply lack the religious vision to recognize the Jewish problem as chiefly spiritual; to feel any consternation at the gradual attrition of all original Jewish values; and so, in their kind-heartedness, they turn to philanthropy and social service, as a sort of outlet for their better impulses; really as the highest possible expression of an ingrowing materialism."

This is the tragedy of Jewish life, of "a people that has lost its God," and the cause of this tragedy is to be found in the "wrong contacts" forced upon the Jew, in the "promiscuous contacts" and "entangling alliances" with a non-Jewish environment. "The cure for all Jewish ills," he points out, "is geography," and if, to be saved,— "the Jew must be led back to the Discovery of the Jewish Soul," then must there be "a gradual repatriation of the Jew in Palestine."

This is the burden of his criticism, and this his solution. It is the criticism of a friend. It is distinctly *self*-criticism. It is written not with glee, but with a bleeding heart. I believe it is written not because the author delights in finding fault, but because to his view, judged in the light of his own experiences, these conditions exist; and he criticises in this way because he wants a greater and finer and truer Judaism to exist than the one he finds at present. There is much that is true in his criticism—true and justified. But there is more that is only half-true, and a good bit that is not true and not justified in his criticism. All too frequently in the course of his essay we find upon careful examination that he is led astray by his own brilliancy, that he, not unlike other men given to epigrammatic writing, is led astray by his own epigrams, clever and scintillating though they are, and one is led to suspect that our author in despite his cleverness does not, after all, see clearly but as through a glass, dimly.

Granting that political emancipation has not realized for us all that we hoped it would bring to us; granting that we did not obtain all the civic equality and all the liberty, all

the freedom and all the fraternity, all the fairness and justice of treatment, all the opportunities for which we looked in the early days of the Nineteenth Century, when this liberating, emancipating movement swept the earth and incidentally benefited the Jew; granting that not all we hoped for, not all we foresaw coming to us in those early days of enthusiasm, came to be—granting this much, we still maintain that this Rabbi's indictment is unproven and somewhat erratic. For certainly political emancipation for the Jew is not a "miserable failure," as he puts it, because when we examine carefully we find that Jewish life since the days of the emancipation has been more vigorous, more active, more vital than it has ever been in the long martyrdom of our people. We find, when we examine the history of the Jew during the last century, that the Jew has been a better Jew, and, as a man, he has been a better man and a more useful citizen than he has been in the ages of persecution. And when we consider the remarkable progress that has been made by the Jew in a little over one century, when we appraise fully the value to himself and to the world of the Jew's participation in every walk of life, in every sphere of activity since emancipation; when we consider all these we cannot help but marvel at the progress and at the achievement of the "failure"!

Rabbi Blau longs for the "hominess," the warmth of the Ghetto life. I fear that he has fallen into the error that all of us fall into when we think of the past. We idealize the past unduly, I fear, and bathe it in the mellowed glow of age, and judge it by the quaintness which is the quaintness of antiquity. The Today is too often over-criticized and its achievements underestimated. And merely to say in this instance, as Rabbi Blau says, that the emancipation movement has been a "miserable failure," view it morbidly and make an *ex-cathedra* declaration of its failure without really adducing any proof, makes it neither "miserable" nor a "failure."

Surely, Emancipation for the Jew has not been a failure in the sense that it took the Jew out of the Ghetto Walls; away from its degradation, from that very "unsplendid isolation" of which he speaks. Surely, he does not long for the "good old days" of the Ghetto, with its civic disabilities, its political and educational discriminations, its commercial inhibitions, its crushing degradations, the humiliating ostracism and segregation of those unblessed days!

Casting off for a moment the morbid pall which he

casts about the picture he tries to draw, it appears that the removal of the Jew from the Ghetto was a Providential blessing, and no one who views Jewish life fairly, and judges rightfully, no one who is not ascetically minded or who judges the Jew not merely as a theologic phenomenon, but who sees the Jew as a man, as a human being that thinks and feels and is desirous of contributing to the life about him, no one who realizes what the Jew has done for the world, especially during this last century, will look upon the years since the Emancipation as having been a "miserable failure," or will look back longingly to the "hominess" and the warmth of the unblessed days of the filth and degradation of the Ghetto!

Surely the Jew has fared better, Jewishly and spiritually, in the free atmosphere of modern democracy than in the stifling, fetid environment into which he was forced by medieval autocracy; and if not all our hopes have been realized, if complete emancipation has not come to us yet, we might turn profitably to the Bible and find the narrative of the enslaved generation that broke away from Egyptian slavery and marched towards Freedom. Their life was not as complex as ours is, their environment had not so many conflicting elements as ours has, yet even they of the generation of the desert, going on a march that should have taken but a short while, had to go through trial and tribulation during a period of forty years, before they could come into the Land of Promise. Remember, that it is but a generation or two since Emancipation came to the Jew. We *are* marching forward, and we are slowly attaining greater freedom and greater equality, and greater recognition.

But even greater, according to Blau, is the failure of Reform Judaism, which came in the wake of that political emancipation.

He points out that despite the existence of Reform Judaism for almost a century, it has not succeeded in obliterating materialism from Jewish life; that despite Reform Judaism there is a lack of mysticism, the want of a transforming conception of God and of faith, and that Reform Judaism in itself is "coldly and correctly formal, philistine, respectable," that it is "a lifeless formalism that no one takes very seriously."

Frankly, it is very surprising to find this Reform Rabbi making these statements unless one ascribes them again to the lure of the epigram. Were it said by someone else; were

it said by one who did not know the history and the hopes of Reform Judaism; were it said by anyone who had not studied it heretofore or was unsympathetic to it, I would say that such a one was suffering from what I may pardonably call some sort of "intellectual measles." But here is a friendly criticism, and it is only, I believe, the ambitions of a loving heart, the ambitions to see the highest ideals of Reform Judaism realized that make him speak as he does and look upon Reform Judaism and its achievement through the gloomy glasses which he uses.

What is Reform Judaism? It is nothing new; and while, in its modern organized expression as a definitive, positive movement, it is recent, the idea of reform in Judaism is over twenty-six hundred years old. We find the beginnings of conscious reform in Judaism with the Book of Deuteronomy, when that book was found, according to the account in the Book of Kings, about seven hundred years before the present era. There we find the beginnings of reform in Judaism, and like a golden thread we can trace the growth and development of Reform Judaism through all of the subsequent ages of Jewish history.

There has always been a struggle in Judaism between liberalism and rationalism, on the one hand, and traditionalism on the other. Traditionalism, not tradition; I distinguish between the two. Reform was always deeply rooted in the Jewish tradition, and it claimed the right to interpret Jewish tradition in the light and knowledge and experience of successive generations. But it was ever opposed to *Traditionalism*, to a *worship* of tradition merely because it was of the past, and the struggle between rationalism or liberalism or reform—call it what you will—and Traditionalism continued through the ages of Jewish history. And we note this remarkable fact: that whenever there was liberty, whenever there was freedom given to the Jew, whenever there was civic and political opportunity given to the Jew, liberalism gained the upper hand; but no sooner were there persecution and oppression, than the Jew found it necessary as a means of self-defense to draw himself into his own seclusion, there to remain until the dawn of a brighter day, and at such times Traditionalism gained the upper hand. And it is quite natural for one who is persecuted and hounded, when the present is dark and the future holds out no hope, to turn to the past, there to try to find hope and consolation and strength and cheer. And so, whenever

persecution came to the Jew he turned to the past, he turned to the literature of the past and the traditions of the past and the ritual of the past—to the words, authorities and legislation of the past—and worshiped them, literally worshiped them; because it was the only consolation his life had, and such light as it contained, was all the light that came into his life. And when we realize that Jewish history had more persecution than freedom, we can readily understand why Traditionalism gained so tremendous a hold.

But reform was reborn, and came in upon the wave of liberty, of freedom and equality, which swept over Europe at the end of the Eighteenth and at the beginning of the Nineteenth Centuries, after the American and the French Revolutions. The Ghetto walls fell, and the Jew, who was immured in those walls for centuries, who was not permitted to participate in the life around him, stepped out. He was eager, to bathe spiritually in the sunshine of European culture. Dazed and overwhelmed, he wanted to absorb that culture, to make it his very own. He wanted to be the equal of the others; and he set out to become that unprepared. Orthodox Judaism remained—orthodox. It continued rigid, fixed, unbending. It was satisfied that the many recognized its authority. With the others it was unconcerned. It was content with calling them wayward, and continued to concern itself with *She'eloth u'Te'shuboth*, with ritual details, with hypothetical problems of sacerdotalism and sacrifices, with pots and with pans, sinfully ignoring the youth in particular standing at the crossroads, refusing to go out to the youth and speak to it the life-giving word, the strengthening word, refusing to reinterpret tradition in the light of the thoughts, the hopes, the aspirations, yea, in terms of the world-view of a new age and a new era. Traditionalism remained unyielding; it ignored the youth; for Orthodoxy remains true to itself whether it be Jewish Orthodoxy or any other kind of Orthodoxy. It always worships exclusively at the shrines of the Past, ever refusing to minister at the altars of the Future.

It is painful to me, friends, to say this. I come from an orthodox environment, and until my later adolescent years I was a convinced orthodox Jew. I have a great sympathy for, and I think I have an understanding of orthodox Judaism. I love that which is beautiful, that which is wholesome, yes, especially that which is sincere and truly Jewish and

devout in Orthodoxy. And there is, oh, so much of that in Orthodoxy! I am not looking for a quarrel, nor am I trying unjustly to criticize. But the truth should be spoken, and even if it hurts it must be spoken, especially when we find not justly nor fairly judged and caricatured the movement which is of youth, the movement which turns eagerly and hopefully to the future and so promisingly leads the hosts of modern Israel unto a brighter day, unto a finer and greater day.

Young Jewry sought light and guidance in the early days of Reform. Traditionalism offered none. What was the result? Why, there was a veritable epidemic of apostasy; hundreds and hundreds of our young people left the fold and embraced Christianity; and as many forsook the House of Israel, until a handful in Israel stepped into the breach determined that young Israel be saved for Judaism, determined to save Judaism itself. They realized that Judaism *could* be saved, and, more, the youth of Israel could be saved for Judaism if it be recognized that in the new day we must speak a new language, we must have new expressions, must adapt what we can and cast away what we can no longer use and wherever necessary create the new in replacement of the discarded old.

That was the beginning of the modern Reform Movement. It came, not as the enemies of Reform frequently say, to destroy Judaism. It came to save Judaism; to regenerate it, to save the Jewish youth for Judaism. It came to build, not to destroy; to construct, not to tear down. And it interpreted Judaism in terms of life rather than in terms of customs and observances and ceremonies. They took out of the Talmud all that could be of value in the new day and age, and found renewed inspiration in the prophetic idealism of the Bible which Orthodoxy neglected, and gave an ethical rather than ritualistic emphasis to Jewish life. They turned to the ritual, for the ritual embodies principles of faith; and they eliminated from it all that was no longer a part of their faith, all that was antiquated and meaningless and void, all that had no longer any significance. They gave woman a position of dignity in Jewish life. And may I be permitted to say, that if Reform Judaism had done nothing else but this, had effected no other change than this,—the liberation of the Jewish woman in the life of the Jew, Reform Judaism could not be called an utter failure! It has given the

Jewish woman a position of dignity not only in the home—a position which she always occupied there—but a position of dignity also in the Synagogue. It eliminated customs that had no significance and that could not be enforced any more. It re-introduced the vernacular into the Service, and the sermon in the vernacular, and enforced decorum during Divine Services.

“Orthodoxy overcame legalism by means of an instinctive piety, Reform became coldly and correctly formal.” There is warmth in Orthodoxy, there is philistinism, cold formalism in Reform, such is the cry of this Rabbi. I could take him into Jewish homes where Reform Judaism is the guiding inspiration of life and introduce him to a religious warmth, to a radiant glow of spirituality, to a Jewish “homeness” and “intimacy” that would expand the heart of the most confirmed mystic. And I could, also, take him into a countless number of so-called Orthodox homes and introduce him to a coldness, to a religious formalism, to a philistinism, to a Godlessness that would chill the enthusiasm of the most hopeful and most ardent exponent of that “dingy milieu of unsplendid isolation” which the old Ghetto was in the “good, old days,” before Emancipation and before Reform.

It has been said that Reform Judaism is ignorant Judaism. It is interesting to note that more creative scholarliness has resulted under the inspiration of Reform, more constructive scholarly work has been done and a better and more thorough presentation of Judaism has been made as a result of the stimulus that came with Reform, presentations that have placed the Jew in a truer light before the world, than ever before in Jewish history. This we say of the scholars and leaders. As to the rank and file, Jewish ignorance abounds in both camps. We admit that, with sorrow. But this ignorance cannot be ascribed to Reform Judaism, for a stupendous Jewish ignorance prevails in circles never reached by Reform, and where it is pretty thoroughly unknown.

Rabbi Blau speaks disparagingly of what he calls philanthropic, eleemosynary Judaism, and implies that there is something unworthy, un-Jewish in philanthropy's identification with Judaism. And the question occurs: Since when has it become unJewish to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to provide shelter for the homeless, to stretch out a helping hand to the helpless, or to bring comfort and

solace to the downtrodden and afflicted? Since when has the practice of *Tsedakah* become irreligious or contrary to the spirit of the Jew, and since when have social service and abundant philanthropy come to constitute a confession of religious failure on the part of the Jew?

Reform Judaism had its greatest growth here in America. And when we think of the consecrated lives and services of the leaders of Reform, of men like Isaac M. Wise and David Einhorn, when we examine the results of their services, see their achievements, and realize what their lives have meant to the Jew in America religiously, and compare their lives and services with those of other leaders of their day and generation, methinks we have no reason to think of Reform Judaism as a failure.

Look at the religious instruction in the Religious Schools of Reform Judaism. Faulty? Yes, very faulty, and there was more fault to be found years ago than there is today. And yet, look at the inspiration that is there imparted to the youth, to the generation of the future; look at the types of Jewish manhood and Jewish womanhood which the modern schools of Reform Judaism are turning out; look at them, and compare them with the product of other schools of Judaism and judge whether Jewishly, ethically, Reform Judaism has failed. Look at the constantly growing numbers of Reform Synagogues. Look at the banding together of the synagogues of America, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the United Synagogues, which is the union of the conservative congregations, all banded together, the better to serve the common cause. I mention this last in this connection, because some of the so-called "conservative" synagogues are more radical even in their conservatism now, and have travelled a greater distance away from Orthodoxy than were and did the early reformers in their days.

Look at the Hebrew Union College and think of the service it rendered to the cause of the Jew. Consider that it is no small factor for Jewry to have over two hundred graduates of that institution standing in the Jewish pulpits of this country, preaching in the vernacular, and interpreting the teachings and message of the Jew to the men and women and children of today, exhorting and urging Jews to earnest and selfless and zealous service of God and man. It is no small matter for the Jew and the world to have the prophetic teachings interpreted before countless multi-

tudes by the descendants of the prophets, in the language of today. Look at the lives of some of the graduates of the Hebrew Union College, each serving in his community and bringing inspiration to countless numbers, and actually influencing, molding life and character. Look at our women's organizations, identified with the religious life of the Jew. Look at the constantly increasing number of young people's organizations in the Reform Congregations of America. Compare all of these with conditions in Judaism in the generation that preceded the coming of modern Reform; compare the present religious situation and religious life of the avowedly Reform Jews with the situation that you will find in the *religious* life of avowedly Orthodox circles and then answer the question: Has Reform Judaism failed?

I admit that there is much that is yet wanting in Reform Judaism in America, that we have not attained unto perfection. But true reform, reform that is dynamic, that is not static, never stops to say "Now we have achieved our aim." Rooted in the hallowed past it looks to the future, and urges men to arise and scale the moral heights until we approach close unto that pinnacle which is ever before us, but which completely we shall never possess. Reform is an unending, unceasing process. And so if we find imperfection in Reform as we do; if we find materialism in the ranks of Reform Jews—and we do; if we find a lack of mysticism, and a want of God-consciousness as we do, let us remember that these are not characteristics of Reform or of Orthodox Jewry, but that the Jew, whatever his theology, is only reflecting his environment, the spirit of the times, and the tendency of the age; nor should we be unmindful of the fact when some of us turn longingly backward and eulogize the "hominess," the inherent piety of the *Ghetto* of old, as Rabbi Blau does, and miss these in present-day life, that in the dimness of receding generations and ages we lose sight of all the materialism, all the negative conditions that have disappeared from our view but which, when we read the literature of the past, we find existed even then, and perhaps even to a greater extent than today. Every generation looks back to the "good old days," but if there ever were "good old days" we would never be where we are. If the best is always past—our generation would indeed be a sorry generation. We have progressed despite the "good old days."

There has been progress, marked progress, because the "good old days" are never behind us, they are always ahead of us.

Rabbi Blau sees the faults and weaknesses of Reform Judaism, and offers a geographical solution — the Jew's repatriation in Palestine. I, too, friends, believe in the possibilities of a Jewish Palestine as a source of Jewish inspiration and strength; but with all of my enthusiasm, with all the enthusiasm that any partisan may have for the hope of a Jewishly restored Palestine, it is not to be thought that the *bulk* of Jewry, even with such a Palestine, will ever be anywhere but outside of it. There will still remain the Diaspora, the scattered communities of Israel; and they will have to solve their problems, not in the light of conditions in Palestine, but in the light of conditions which they will confront in their immediate respective environments. We dare not put *all* our hopes upon Palestine, and even there, if evidences are not misleading, the settlers will ere long have to face the same religious problems which Reform Judaism has faced and tried to solve. To say that Judaism's hope and solution is geographical is to misunderstand Judaism. Judaism is not geographical; Judaism is of the soul; and wherever there is a Jewish heart beating, wherever there are Jews coming in contact and association with their fellow men, there we will find the same practical problems for Judaism to solve.

We need more mysticism, we need more piety, more warmth, more saintliness in Jewish life, of course. These will come. We are working toward these. We are praying for these and are training our children in the spirit and by the light of that hope.

Reform has not failed, cannot fail,—because it is facing in the right direction, looking toward the future. And Reform Judaism will not fail, if we, who profess it, continue to serve as we have served in the past, as we are trying to serve in the present,—in the spirit of Abraham Geiger, sage and master spirit of Reform Judaism, who said: "*In der Vergangenheit forschen, in der Gegenwart leben, fuer die Zukunft bauen*"—"Search in the past, live in the present, and build for the future."

Is the World Growing Worse?

A DISCOURSE AT TEMPLE KENESETH ISRAEL.

By RABBI ABRAHAM J. FELDMAN.

Philadelphia, February 26, 1922.

One cannot pick up a newspaper these days without finding recorded in its columns the sigh of those who grieve over the sad plight of humanity, without finding graphically sketched the outlines of the doom awaiting society. One cannot turn to any of the serious periodicals without having thrust upon his attention forecasts of the certain ruin and decay which civilization is rushing to encounter. Hardly a pulpit in the land but its occupant thunders against the vice and the immorality, the dishonesty and the cupidity, the evil and the sinfulness of the day. And the cumulative effect of all these denunciations is the impression that there is little that is good and pure, not much that is true and wholesome left in modern society.

And at first blush, this impression seems to be justified and correct. For there certainly is a disheartening amount of imperfections. There are murders committed constantly. There is infidelity. There is vice and crime of every kind on every hand. There is treachery. There is a laxity in morals, there are license and looseness, falsehood and vileness in all human relations, and in all social spheres. Here the husband slays his wife, there the wife shoots her husband. There a mother forsakes husband and children to elope with a husband and father. Elsewhere is displayed the contaminating sight of husband accusing wife of infidelity and of the wife proving the husband to be infinitely more rotten and lecherous and beastly. Here we find one fleecing and bleeding the widow and the orphan of

the savings of a lifetime or of the insurance of the deceased husband and father, there we behold the graft and the dishonesty of law-maker and law-enforcer.

Capital and labor are at each other's throats constantly. There are walk-outs and lock-outs, starvation wages and unemployment. Greed and selfishness, dishonesty and double-dealing, promises recklessly made and just as carelessly broken, the resulting discontent and distrust, the shameful extravagance of the few, the tragic want of the many, the satiety of some, the *ennui* of those who have tasted too much either of joys and luxuries or of griefs and privations. We rant about democracy and the blessings of liberty in America, and deny suffrage and protection of life and limb to citizens of America. We speak of patriotism in one breath and in the next we ask to be paid for that same patriotism. Everywhere—injustice, everywhere—corruption, everywhere—dishonesty, everywhere—sin, and despair, and tragedy. Broken homes, broken lives, shattered hopes, ideals crushed under the weight of disillusionment, faith fleeting—a sad, sad state of affairs, wherever we turn our gaze.

“Right forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne.” This seems to be the experience of man, and under its crushing weight, pessimism plays its wretched discords upon the snapping strings of human hearts.

These are only some of the negative manifestations of life. Countless others come to mind even while we speak. And man reacts to them. And reactions vary with different men.

A study of such reactions enables us to group them under four classifications.

There is first the type of man whose reactions lead him into the camp of the pessimists, into the company of the cynics. The theory of the pessimist is rather well summarized in the Biblical book of Koheleth or Ecclesiastes.

“What profit hath man of all his labor wherein he laboreth under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; and the earth abideth forever. The sun rises and the sun

sets, and to his rising place he returneth. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it turneth about continually in its circuit, and returneth again to its circuits. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place whither the streams flow, from there they flow back again. All things toil to weariness beyond human utterance. That which hath been is that which shall be; and what has happened is that which shall happen, so that there is nothing new under the sun. . . . I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind."

And just as we behold a monotony in nature, constant repetition, an endless circle, aimless and endless and unreasoning, so, too, does the pessimist find human life to be. His is the theory that life is aimless, purposeless, without goal. It is a dreary monotony, it is a vicious circle, it is empty, hollow, valueless. Progress is a meaningless term, growth is a lie, newness is a misconception. And, although Koheleth is, as the late Professor Jastrow has so splendidly pointed out, a *gentle* cynic, yet he, too, in a moment of bitterness, comes to the conclusion to which the pessimists of all ages and climes have come: "I hate life"; it is not worth while. Koheleth is too gentle and too inconsistent to welcome death, but suicide is the only logical escape from the horrors and depression of life.

This group believes also that man is helpless to change conditions, and all efforts to improve and to reform, to advance from the past, to hope for a brighter future, are all vain and a chasing after the wind, for "who can make that straight, which God hath made crooked?"

They who accept this counsel and philosophy see only one side of life, view but one aspect of it, though they claim to see clearly and at times speak plausibly. There can be no negative where no positive exists, and it is just the union of positive and negative that makes the whole of life. The facts of life are but summations of so many contrasts. In electricity there is no complete circuit possible except through the co-operation of the positive and the negative. Of the two poles of a magnet, the one attracts, the other repels. The more energy the blacksmith puts forth in his work, the stronger his muscles become. They

do not realize when they complain of an excess of rain over sunshine that the two stand in the relation of cause and effect to each other. And so to view the shadows and to proclaim that all is shadow is a confession of failure to think and to reason. For where the shadow is, there must be light, where there is no light there are no shadows, and "where there is much light the shadows are deepest."

They claim that life is aimless and hopeless and empty. They claim that life is wicked and cruel and painful. They assert that—

"——the struggle naught availeth,
The labor and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been, they remain."

But that is not true. The record of human life tells a different tale. It is a glorious record, a fascinating tale. It is captivating as we view it in retrospect, it is reassuring as we examine it in the light of our contemporary experience. It lifts us in vision and hope and faith not so that we might perceive the end of life, for faith and hope know neither end nor finality—but rather that ours may be the stimulus and the joy that come with the knowledge that man *can* achieve, that man *does* progress, that man is indeed *shutoph l'ma'aseh be'reshith*, a co-worker of God, and a contributor to the unfolding processes of the universe, in its physical aspects, as in its spiritual glories, in its mechanical as in its human phases!

There are two other groups reacting to the negative manifestations of life, and these consist of—if I may be permitted to use colloquial designations—the "Blues" and the "Reds."

They whom I designate the "Blues" are a group of men and women who are not pessimists. But neither are they optimists. They are people whose mental vision is impaired through a sort of mental strabismus, unable to

see straight nor yet clearly. They are in addition spiritually near-sighted. They are concerned not with the past primarily, although they are loath to part company with it, eager to live in it, yearning to preserve it intact. They are people who would immerse the ideas and manners and thoughts, and habits of life of what they think was the past in a fountain of eternal youth, if they could, so as to preserve these unchangeable, and they invoke the dogma of the inabrogability of the dicta and standards of the past that they might perform the miracle of its preservation. And indeed, nothing short of a miracle could preserve the past as they would have it.

Being afflicted with mental strabismus and spiritual myopia they view all life through the dark, smoky lenses of disapproval. Nothing satisfies them nor pleases them. Koheleth sought refuge from the depressing aimlessness of life in the joy and happiness of living which he says are God-given, given to man to be used and enjoyed. These people object to joy and happiness on theologic grounds, and would stem the undoubtedly existing evil and sin in the world through legislative enactments and legal inhibitions of all that which through abuse may in the remotest degree lead to sin and corruption and decay.

These are offset by the so-called "Reds" or rabid radicals, who, dissatisfied with things as they are, and impatient with the slow process of evolution, unmindful of the adjustments and adaptations necessitated by changes of human institutions and forms of government and organization, posit theories which are meant to usher in the millenium, and are scathing and venomous in their impatience at society's slow response. And whilst the "Blues" love to turn to the mythical and legendary "good old days" for inspiration, these, the "Reds," reject the past on the ground that it did not function according to future specifications, and vociferously proclaim that nothing that was—was good, nothing that is—is good, nor can anything that is as yet to be—

be good, unless it comes to be in accordance with the particular prescription written by the particular group or sect in question.

And there is yet another group of people reacting to the evils of the day. It is composed of men and women who cherish the past for its lessons to the present, who revere the past for the lives it contained and its achievements, who study the past for its inspiration and encouragement, for the strength that it gives them to live and to struggle for the dawn of the brighter, greater day, that is yet to come.

They, too, see the wrong that prevails. They are keenly sensitive to all that is unmoral and unjust, to all that is evil and decadent, to all that is false and dishonest, to all that is negative in life, to all that is subversive of the greater and finer aspirations and hopes of the greatest minds and seers and prophets and martyrs of the ages. They regret and lament over these manifestations. Their hearts bleed, their resentment is aroused, and they, too, by voice and deed and example strive to reduce the evil and encourage the good.

They are found on the firing line among the moral, positive forces of society. But unlike the "Blues"—they do not make a fetish of the past, and unlike the "Reds"—they see the danger to the cause of man when revolution is invoked, where evolution is surely functioning, and unlike the pessimist they despair not of the world, and consciously proclaim not the doom of the world, not its growing deterioration, not its inglorious end—but an ever greater, better, finer world than ever yet there was. To their view the world is not growing worse—but ever better, not less moral—but more moral, and they view the future ever more and more hopefully and cheerfully.

And their attitude is justified in the light of History. For they view History not as Voltaire did, as "little else than a picture of human crimes and misfortunes," but as Tennyson viewed it, as

“The great world’s altar-steps
That slope thro’ darkness up to God.”

They do not deny the crimes and misfortunes. They but insist that the very fact that misfortune and crime are so loudly heralded is an indication that these constitute not the rule but the exception. The world notices the person who steals the loaf of bread, the newspapers publish it far and wide, but we remain ignorant of the hundreds and thousands who choose to starve to death rather than touch aught that is not recognized by society and convention to be legally and rightfully theirs. We hear all about the great number of divorces which occur; nothing is said about the millions and millions of happy homes and blessed firesides, yea nothing at all about the thousands of firesides whence peace and agreement and love have flown, but which are yet preserved at a cost never to be computed so that children may grow up under the joint protection of both parents. At well-nigh every death bed, one may hear a cheering tale. For wretched indeed is that life that leaves behind not one grateful thought, not one other person who can tell of deeds of kindness, of mercy and consideration, that leaves not behind any recollections of a cheering word spoken in the hour of gloom, of a friendly act performed in the moment of need, of an encouraging word and strengthening look. There is no life so miserable, but it had its redeeming phases, there is no person so sinful, but that he had his saintly moments.

We are shocked at the evidences of vulgarity and profanity of speech and attitude found in the world today. One need but turn to the writings of Richardson or Fielding or Smollett, to realize how we have gone up on the ladder of refinement since the days when ladies in court and gentlemen of the nobility in ordinary mutual conversation used a speech that for obscenity and vulgarity and profanity today could be found nowhere except, perhaps, in the very lowest stages of moral decay and degradation.

“Progress is,” indeed, “the law of life.” We have, but to examine and think—and we are astonished at the revelation.

Just think of it—within the memory of living men, some of them are in this congregation today, there occurred the invention of electric lights and the invention and development of the telephone and the telegraph, the automobile and the aeroplane, the wireless telegraph and the radio telephone, the sewing machine, the moving picture, the phonograph. Two centuries ago, the world knew nothing of steam or steamboats, of railways and locomotives; three hundred years ago the world was ignorant of newspapers and postoffices; five hundred years ago printing was unknown; a thousand years ago there was no compass; two thousand years ago paper was as yet unknown.

When we think that our Electoral College is a remnant of the days, less than one hundred and fifty years ago, when the result of an election in the thirteen neighboring States was unknown for several months, and think of the air-mail-service of today, of the wireless and the cable and the telegraph and telephone; when we compare the modern fast trans-oceanic liners with the Mayflower of the Pilgrims, when we think of the length of time it took the Pilgrims to reach this land, and know of the few days and hours in which we cross the ocean today, we get some vague conception of the material progress made by mankind. We realize then that distance for us is well-nigh annihilated, that printing and electricity, steam and oil and gasoline, have made of the entire world a neighborhood, that photography has made world-trotters of all of us, and that the humblest of us today enjoys comforts and luxuries which the great and mighty of the earth, but a short while ago, dreamed not of.

Nor has the progress been merely material. A time there was when only the priests and monks could read and write. Today illiteracy is a social disgrace and even in Russia, the most illiterate of modern lands, illiteracy during the Bolshevik regime is rapidly decreasing. The world is

becoming educated as it has never been educated before. A time there was when a grammar school education was an achievement. Today that is compulsory, high schools are overcrowded, and universities are counting their students by the tens of thousands. The sciences are flourishing as they have never flourished before, and the facts of life and of the universe are becoming subjects intimately familiar to young and old, to high and low. Libraries have multiplied tremendously, and the knowledge of the ages, the thoughts and experiences of man have been brought within easy access of all, and a home without books is less easily conceivable than is a home without the most essential sanitary equipment.

Think of the progress of medicine, to us the closest and most intimate of the sciences. Think of the fact that the great plagues that were wont to ravage the world are now known only as past historic facts, and that thanks to the improved standards of living, and the greater and more exact knowledge of sanitation and hygiene disease is steadily decreasing; that leprosy once the dread of man has now practically disappeared, that anti-toxin has abolished the terror of diphtheria, that the Pasteur treatment has abolished the scourge of hydrophobia, that Jenner's vaccine has made small-pox exceedingly rare, that infant mortality is rapidly declining, and that progress is seen even in the battle with tuberculosis, and we realize, then, that at least on this score the world is making rapid forward strides, and is not only not growing worse, but is infinitely better.

Compare the position of woman in the past with her position today. No longer a chattel, a piece of property for men-folk to dispose of at their whim, she has slowly emerged from her state of enforced degradation, until she now rises in the flowering dignity of human personality. the mother of the race, to be sure, but also the comrade and co-worker, the equal of man in the struggle and task of life, bringing to it mind and heart, sweetness and en-

thusiasm, and a sense of consecration which is transforming and beatifying!

Let us recall gratefully that human slavery has now disappeared from every civilized land, but let us, as we ask ourselves the question whether the world is growing worse, also recall that it is less than three score and ten years since this nation poured its hearts' blood out in civil war to erase the disgrace and crime of slavery from its body politic.

Yes, the ideal of human brotherhood is gaining ground. Not only has slavery been abolished, not only has woman been emancipated and enfranchised, but like the burning bush remaining unconsumed, by reason of the flame's being not the fire of destruction, but the divine blaze of liberation and redemption, so do we find the ideal of human brotherhood burning ever brighter, unquenchably. In every sphere of human endeavor, in every walk of life do we find its glow.

The poor is more truly our brother today than yesterday, and we conceive it our duty not only to help him, but to look into the causes of his poverty that poverty may be prevented. The social misfits, whether through disease or life-sapping habits, whether through industrial injustice or political corruption, whatever the causes, we know them today as our brothers for whom we are responsible, and we study their cases now not only to offer palliation, but to find the underlying causes for the wrecks and tragedies of lives, and in accordance with our findings we are today organizing our entire social machinery to the end that no such wreckage and ruin may occur in the future.

And in the light of this ideal of human brotherhood and social responsibility, we find that Social Justice is ceasing to be merely a high sounding phrase, but is becoming ever more real through legislative enactment and in consequence of an educated and aroused public opinion and of a sensitive social conscience.

Wealth is becoming ever more a public trust and less and less a matter of greedy and selfish possession. Business

and industrial standards are changing to conform to these higher conceptions, and one has but to examine the tendency of industrial legislation in the last two decades, observe the growing mass of regulations concerning child labor and woman labor, the hours of labor and compensation insurance, health and safety regulations, and compare these with earlier standards to realize fully that the world is growing better, and is becoming a better, safer place to live in than ever before.

Even in the sphere of Religion, the most conservative force in society, even there marvellous progress has been made. We have but to recall that in the literature of Greece and Rome we look in vain for evidences of religious liberty. We need but think of the unholy Inquisition which was not formally abolished until 1834, recall the persecutions and pyres, the intolerance and the crimes perpetrated in its name, recall the Index of Prohibited Books, recall the coercions and compulsions practiced in its behalf, and recall "the definitive triumph in our century of the idea that nobody ought for religious motives to be persecuted or deprived of full juridical capacity," * to appreciate fully that progress is being made, that man is marching on, and in light of the evidence available to realize that

“ . . . thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the
process of the suns.”—(Tennyson.)

Even in international relations, we find the ideal of human brotherhood taking root. The World War notwithstanding, its magnitude and cruelty notwithstanding—war was never more accursed of men and world peace never a more fervent and more realizable hope than it is today. If this war has proven anything it has proven that there is a measure of truth in Napoleon's cynical remark that in warfare God was ever on the side of the strongest battalions,

*Francesco Ruffini—"Religious Liberty."

that in physical struggle and contest not Right is the mightiest, but Might, brute force and power. And from this conception man recoils with horror, and with that perseverance which has marked his progress through the ages, he now turns earnestly, seriously to realize the ideal of international co-operation, of international association and agreement. The ever enlarging scope of International Law, the recent Washington Conference for the limitation of armaments, the convening within the last fortnight of the International Court of Justice—all of these are indices of the tendency of the times, and point to the undoubted fact that Lincoln's faith in Right as the mightiest force on earth is becoming, however slowly, the established faith of mankind.

"Is the world growing worse?" Not if we view life in its entire complexity. Not if we try to see it whole, view its progress from humblest beginnings to its present higher plane.

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," does not characterize life's hopes and struggles and faith. "A chasing after the wind," is not the answer to life's disappointments. There is no cause for despair, as there is no reason for Pessimism, for they who have eyes and see, who have ears and hear, who have hearts and feel, can verily behold that

"Out of the shadows of night
The world rolls into light;
It is daybreak everywhere."—(Longfellow.)

This let us realize fully. And realizing it let us work patiently—since supreme patience is needed; let us serve hopefully—since hope is the driving force of progress. Thus let us work and strive towards the morning that is yet to be, the morning that is surely dawning.

“To Thine Own Self Be True”

A Discourse at Temple Keneseth Israel.

By RABBI ABRAHAM J. FELDMAN.

Philadelphia, March 26, 1922.

I cannot recall a novel in recent years that, to me, was so fascinating, so stirring, so brilliant, as is A. S. M. Hutchinson's novel, *If Winter Comes*. And judging by the enormous sales and circulation of the book as well as by the universal acclaim of literary critics which it received, my reaction to the book is neither unique nor surprising. From the purely literary point of view the book is a work of art. The style is splendid. “The dialogue,” says no less a critic than the editor of the *Bookman*, “sparkles, hits, jumps, races—does practically everything that human talk should. It is penetrating, bubbling with humor, pathos and genuine excitement. It is the novel of an expert craftsman—it is vivid and real.”

In brief, it is the story of Mark Sabre, a man who was a dreamer, a man who

“saw much more clearly and infinitely more intensely with his mind than with his eye. . . . It was not what the eye saw or the ear heard that interested him; it was what his mind saw, questing behind the scene and behind the speech, that interested him, and often, by the intensity of its perception, shook him. And precisely as beauty touched in him the most exquisite and poignant depths, so evil surroundings, evil faces dismayed him to the point of mysterious fear, almost terror—”

He was a man who loved books, and loved the world of ideas and ideals to which the books led him and guided him. He was a man with a soul sensitized to the higher promptings of life. He was a man possessed of the “milk of human kindness” to a degree which, as the world judges happiness, makes the average man unhappy, miserable, uncomfortable, the butt of cynical jest, the target for the practical, and the “sensible.” He was a man who saw the good in the humblest, and the spiritually beautiful in the lowliest. He judged men by his own high ideal standards, and yielded his own interest where this interest might have hurt another. The ideal of his life was expressed in the conception “God is love,” therefore “he that dwelleth in love dwelleth

in God and God in him." To that ideal he chose to be true, that conception was the motivating force of his life, upon the altar of that ideal, unassumingly, modestly, but courageously and faithfully he sacrificed his fortune, his health, almost his life.

His exact counterpart in the book is his wife Mabel. She is cold of temperament, conventionally correct, socially a snob, heartlessly, brutally practical. He had enthusiasms and sympathies; she had none. He had imagination; she was devoid of it.

"To Mabel there was nothing mysterious in birth, or in living, or in death. She simply would not have understood had she been told there was any mystery in these things. One was born, one lived, one died. What was there odd about it? Nor did she see anything mysterious in the intense preoccupation of an insect, or the astounding placidity of a primrose growing at the foot of a tree. An insect—you killed it. A flower—you plucked it. What's the mystery?"

"Her life was living among people of her own class. Her measure of a man or of a woman was, Were they of her class? . . .

"Music was a tune, and was either a tune or merely music. A book was a story, and if it was not a story, it was simply a book. A flower was a decoration. . . .

"She thought charity meant giving jelly and red flannel to the poor; she thought generosity meant giving money to some one; she thought selfishness meant not giving money to some one. She had no idea that the only real charity is charity of mind, and the only real generosity, generosity of mind, and the only real selfishness, selfishness of mind. And she simply would not have understood if it had been explained to her."

She could not and did not understand her husband, and they drifted farther and farther apart.

In his business, Mark Sabre was also not in a harmonious element nor sympathetically adjusted, because of his point of view, because of his sense of honor, because of his peculiar outlook upon life, the point of view of a dreamer and idealist rather than that of the matter-of-fact, hard-headed, flint-hearted, unscrupulous Mr. Fortune, (the head of the firm), or of the equally as unscrupulous, Twynning, a scheming, treacherous, Janus-faced sycophant.

The war broke out and Sabre was swept off his feet by the idealism that came with the war, and after several unsuccessful attempts to enlist he succeeds. When he returns, crippled, he finds that he had been pushed out of the business. His wife is increasingly cold and apathetic. And to add to the complicated situation, a letter comes to Mabel from a young girl whom Mark introduced into his home to

be his wife's companion while he was in France, a letter telling that she had become a mother and in her desperate plight as a social outcast so long as she retained her baby, appeals to Mrs. Sabre to take her and her baby into her home. The girl refuses to reveal the paternity of the child—and circumstantial evidence seems to draw Mabel's suspicion that her husband, who intercedes for the girl and baby, is the father of the child. His plea is interesting. He feels that the girl has a claim upon them. He says:

"In the first place, she'd turned to us in her abject misery for help and that alone established a claim, even if it had come from an utter stranger. It establishes a claim because here is a human creature absolutely down and out come to *us*, picking *us* out from everybody, for succour. You've got to respond. You're picked out. You! One human creature by another human creature. Breathing the same air. Sharing the same mortality. Responsible to the same God. You've got to. You can't help yourself. You're caught. If you hear some one appealing to any one else you can scuttle out of it. Get away. Pass by on the other side. Square it with your conscience any old how. But when that some one comes to you, you're done, you're fixed. You may hate it. You may loathe and detest the position that's been forced on you. But it's there. You can't get out of it. The same earth as your earth is there at your feet imploring you; and if you've got a grain, a jot of humanity, you must, you must, out of the very flesh and bones of you, respond to that cry of this your brother or your sister made as you yourself are made.

"Well, . . . that's one claim the girl has on us, and to my way of thinking it is enough. But she has another, a personal claim. She'd been in our house, in our service; she was our friend; sat with us; eaten with us; talked with us; shared with us; and now, now, turned to us. Good God, is that to be refused? Is that to be denied? Are we going to repudiate that? Are we going to say, 'Yes, it's true you were here. You were all very well when you were of use to us; that's all true and admitted; but now you're in trouble and you're no use to us; you're in trouble and no use.' Good God, are we to say that?"

Against the objection of Mabel he takes the girl and baby in, and his wife leaves him, entering suit for divorce, the grounds being a violation of the Seventh Commandment.

He becomes a social outcast, isolated and ignored by all. While he is away on a brief vacation the girl commits suicide, killing her child at the same time, and at the coroner's inquest Mark is found guilty of being the indirect cause of the double tragedy, the most serious evidence adduced being a network of lies spun by Twynning, the member of the firm with which Sabre had been connected.

Upon his return home from the agonizing ordeal of the inquest he found a note left by the deceased in which she

reveals the fact that *Twynning's son*, now at war, to whom she had been secretly engaged, was the father of her child!

Maddened by the indignities heaped upon him by the lying testimony of Twynning he rushes to Twynning's office prepared to "cram the letter down his throat." When he arrives he finds Twynning distraught by the news of his son's death in war. Shall Sabre now avenge himself? Shall he now cover the name of the soldier killed in the service with the ignominy heaped upon himself? Shall he add to the burden of grief of a father—even though that father be his treacherous foe—add to the woes of a father by proving to him that this "heroic" son was a cowardly wretch?

The ideal by which Mark Sabre guided his life comes to the surface of his consciousness. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him; for God is love." And Mark Sabre throws the letter—the only proof of his innocence, the only evidence that could clear his name, he throws this letter into the flame in the fireplace,

"and went over to Twynning and stood over him. He patted Twynning's heaving shoulders. 'There, there Twynning. Bad luck, Bad luck . . . Bear up, Twynning, Soldier's death . . . Finest death . . . Died for his country . . . Fine boy.' . . ."

But the ordeal has proven too great for him. A hemorrhage of the brain occurs, and after many months of suffering and struggle within the shadow of death, he recovers to find that Mabel had in the meantime divorced him and married again. But he finds his reward, or consolation, in the true love and fine understanding, and never failing confidence in him of Nona, his boyhood sweetheart, now his understanding, sympathetic, loving wife.

Thus the story, in briefest outline.

It is woven about this one man, whom the author seems to love surpassingly. Some people with whom I discussed the book feel an aversion for Sabre. He is weak, they claim, in that he permits people to do him injustice, he is not vigorous, not manly. He deserved what he got—say some. In this work-a-day world this type of idealist has no place. The dreamer, the visionary, is useless; more than that,—he is an encumbrance. These are some of the comments I heard, although it should be said, that they are the comments of a minority among the readers of this book.

I, for one, see no such weakness in the character. I, for one, see in Mark Sabre a type of man, but for whom, life today would still be at the low level of barbarism and on the plane of the uncivilized. I see in Mark Sabre a type of that company of souls truly brave of whom evolving History has a growing roster, a type of them who *dared* to be true to themselves, who nobly dared to dream in a world of *unrealities*, and having dreamed had the supreme courage to guide their lives by the glow of their stirring ideals. I see in Mark Sabre one who is of that company of the aristocrats of the Ideal, who, in the face of crushing conventions, in the face of antiquated standards of conduct, standards false, and unworthy as they are false, dare to take their idealism seriously and strive to live by those high standards.

It is not the weak man, the spineless creature that guides his life by his ideal. It is the strong of heart, the heroic of soul, the clean and honest of purpose, that is the true hero in the strife of life. Not he the weakling who accepts martyrdom rather than yield one jot or tittle of his principle. Not he the weakling who dares to be true to himself, and to his convictions. Rather is he the coward who, professing an ideal, *compromises* in the face of difficulty, flinches in the face of obstacles, and supinely yields for the sake of the material comforts, the conveniences, the things of the body, the considerations of prosperity, and the opinion and adulations of the thoughtless crowd. "Sacred courage," says Emerson somewhere, "indicates that a man loves an idea better than all things in the world; that he is aiming neither at self nor comfort, but will venture all to put in act the invisible thought of his mind."

An instance of such courage and devotion came to my notice recently. A colleague, a class mate of mine, occupied the pulpit in a southern community. On a Friday evening an infuriated white mob lynched a negro,

"and" my friend writes me, "the corpse was dragged past the door of one of the most lovable Negro Baptist preachers, Bishop X, honored in National Negro and Baptist religious circles. The mob also passed with the corpse by the Temple just as I was preaching. You may well imagine the disturbance and excitement. It was done, so I am assured, by the most representative members of this town's aristocracy. The challenge was too strong for me not to take it up, and naturally enough, I am now looking for another pulpit."

It *was* a challenge; a challenge to the honesty of the teacher. It was a challenge to the courage of the preacher. It was a challenge to the soul of the idealist. Here was a heinous crime committed, and the evidence of it was shamefully and shamelessly brought to the very door of the man of God and of the house of God. Should the Rabbi have remained silent? Should discretion have outweighed his honesty and sincerity? Should the physical suffering and privation which might have ensued for himself and his little family have deterred him from denouncing as he did the culprits, the "aristocracy," the "representative citizens" who prate against Bolshevism and anarchy, who prate about "Law and Order," who prate about the inviolability of the Constitution, prate about Democracy, prate about ours being a Government of laws, and at the same time permit the unspeakable crime of lynching, yea, perpetuate and perpetrate it by their own connivance and direct participation.

This young Jewish teacher had to pay the price for his "indiscretion," for having dared to be true to himself, to his profession of faith, to the law of God and the imperious urge of his conscience. Thank God, he was true!

But who is the weakling in this disgraceful affair? Is it the man who had an ideal and proved true to it, or are those the brave, the courageous souls, who subscribe to the same ideal but repudiate it when the test comes, when it means control of wrath, when it means self-restraint, when it means applying the ideal in conduct and living?

And though Mark Sabre stood the test heroically when he chose to destroy the evidence that would have cleared his name rather than prove false to the ideal of divine love in human life which was his life's ideal, they who find fault with this character presume to say that there is no such character living, that he is an unreal type, yea more, that he is an undesirable type.

The answer that might be given them is that there is none so blind as he who would not see. On every hand, in every sphere and walk of life we may find men and women who are true to their ideals, and, after all, "our ideals *are* our better selves." On every hand there are to be found men and women who have caught a glimpse of the Light and by that Light guide their lives, irrespective of the physical consequences. They may not be found among those who justify their means by the end, the end being the ac-

cumulation of wealth, honestly or otherwise, after which they propose to cast away the evil of their ways, and seek to atone for the dishonesties and crimes, for their greed and cruelty, by doing an abundance of good, failing to realize that the evil they do *can never be undone*, and that judged by the standards of the soul, weighed in the scales of the Ideal, it is their own souls that have suffered the greatest shrinkage, their own lives that have become perverted, their own hearts that have lost their human softness, their own spiritual vision that has been dimmed, their own moral lives that have become singed and scorched and charred in the process.

It is claimed that the lives of the Mark Sabres are barren of results. They achieve and attain nothing. Again and again we hear it proclaimed as it was proclaimed of old, *The prophet is a fool, the man of the spirit is mad!* Again and again do we witness the spectacle of the man of vision persecuted because of his vision, the seeker after truth denounced as an outcast and a pariah, the inspired leader's motives questioned, his name besmirched, his life filled with gall and bitterness. And just as frequently is History witness to the fact that in despite the judgment of contemporaries, that in despite the persecution and the defamation, the *real* factors in civilization, they who ultimately contributed the most and gave the strongest impetus to progress were these very men of vision, these despised and accursed of men, men of sorrow in their lifetime, but the worshipped saints and seers of subsequent ages and generations!

One has but to think of Baruch Spinoza, excommunicated by his own, accursed and read out of the household of Israel for daring to be true to his views and ideas, refusing to recant, preferring the curse of ostracism in honest freedom to the questionable blessings of spiritual bondage. One thinks of Girolamo Savonarola, of Florence, inveighing mightily against the sins and misdeeds of his age, and of his choice of martyrdom in preference to becoming untrue to himself! One thinks of Israel's prophets in an earlier age. One recalls the trials and travails of Jeremiah—his repeated imprisonments, the floggings to which he was subjected, the condemnation by his friends, the desertion by even his nearest relatives, the violence and the abuse, the personal indignities to which he was subjected—all of which he might have escaped, he *would* have escaped had he but refrained

from speech, had he forsaken his ideal. But he chose persecution and abuse and indignities in preference to turning false to his vision, in preference to becoming untrue to himself.

One thinks of Amos, the shepherd of Tekoa, and of his famous answer to Amaziah, the Priest, when the latter prohibited him from speaking his message and bade him return to the hills of Tekoa whence he came, an answer so defiant and so challenging as to be elemental.

One thinks of Elijah the Tishbite, uncompromising foe of idolatry, a restless wanderer, hounded and sought after as the foe of the State, as the disturber of the peace, as the revolutionary teacher. One thinks of his life and of his choice to remain true—even though he stand alone as the prophet of the One God, to remain fearless, to speak his message and speak it defiantly, hurling it into the very faces and teeth of the sinners and transgressors of his age.

One thinks of these and of others who in their respective ages and generations stood bravely by their convictions, and heroically endured vilification and defamation and obloquy, and one recalls those of today who with Hosea's contemporaries of yore say *evil hanabi*, *meshuggo ish haruach*, *the prophet is a fool*, *the man of the spirit is mad*, and one wonders whether all those great souls have lived in vain, and suffered in vain.

Insofar as no prophet of an earlier or later day has lived to see the fulfillment of his vision these "practical" souls of today who would measure idealism by the yardstick and weigh its value by the ounce or ton, may be justified in their claim that the seer and the dreamer and the man of vision are failures, miserable failures. But judged in the light of history, and by the influence those ideals wielded over human lives, and by the undoubted spiritual progress that has been made, however short the distance traversed may be, one wonders whether Isaiah's vision of the swords being beaten into plowshares, and of the ultimate dawn of universal brotherhood and peace is to be adjudged today as the inane vaporings of an insane man.

In the inanimate world nothing comes into being except through much transformation, and in consequence of a tremendous expenditure of energy and strength. In the animate world nothing is born except after great travail and intense pain, and growth and development come only after careful

nurture and tender care. So, too, in the life of the spirit, in the world of ideas, in the quest after Truth, it is not until we experience much suffering and anguish, not until souls have been sorely tried, and sacrifices untold made, not until the world has suffered much and sacrificed much, can it bring to fulfillment the visions of its noblest children. And the more sublime the vision, the longer is the period of purification through suffering, and the further off is the day of the dreams' realization.

And one more query there is. Would these practical souls have had Savonarola and Huss, Jeremiah and Elijah, be otherwise than they were? Would they have preferred them to be otherwise than unyielding and uncompromising, otherwise than true to themselves and to their enthralling vision? And who, pray, could have determined whether these men of the spirit were right or wrong? History has proved *them* right, and their persecutors wrong and unjust, just as history will yet justify the Mark Sabres of our own times, the lesser ones no less than the spiritual giants of our own age. Their lot it is to stand alone. Was it not Lowell who sang:

"Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes,—they were souls that stood
alone,
While the men they agonized for hurled the contumelious stone,
Stood serene, and down the future saw the golden beam incline
To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith divine,
By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's supreme
design."

And if Ibsen was right, that "the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone," then it is these men in their respective spheres who are the towering spiritual Titans of our age. They are strong because they are unshaken in their idealism, they are strong because they have the Light by which to guide their path, they are strong because they are honest with themselves and honorable in their relations to their fellows, they are strong in the knowledge that they can fearlessly look at themselves and reviewing their lives can truthfully say:

"The prize is not the wreath with envy rife,
But to have been all our souls might be."—*Bates*.

Such, indeed, is the privilege of those who dare to be true to their own selves. And a rare privilege it is. It is given to few men to rise to the majesty of spiritual heroism

or of heroic idealism. Most of us are willing to be idealists so long as the Ideal imposes no difficulties, demands no sacrifices, involves no disturbance of the placid flow of social life. But no sooner are we faced with situations where courageous speech is imperative, where energetic action is called for, situations which when honorably met involve sacrifice and endanger standing or position, then we flinch and falter and fail to prove our professed idealism.

“The Time Demands

Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and willing hands.
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking.”—*J. G. Holland.*

These men are few, men of this calibre are scarce and rare. But those few today, as of yore, share the lot of Mark Sabre, the lot of the prophets of other days—the heart-corroding experience of isolation, of misunderstanding, of abuse and humiliation.

Many may fall and succumb. But their every breath and every example has not been in vain, and somewhere, somehow, these become joined unto the selfless, honest, and true lives of others, contributing to and functioning truly in behalf of, the betterment, the ennoblement of human life.

Suffer they will. Struggle they must. But if they be truly sun-crowned, strong of mind, great of heart, and firm in faith, then can they no more resist the divine urge, they could no more be false to themselves than could the prophet of old, who, although in the deepest despair, yet felt that the word of God was shut up in his bosom and was there like a raging, consuming flame which he could not control.

They will be scoffed and mocked at. They will be taken advantage of. But they will endure. They will travail. They will continue to guide their lives as their like have ever done, as I pray God it may be given us to guide our lives, by the rule of conduct which Shakespeare quotes:

“To thine own self be true;
And it must follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

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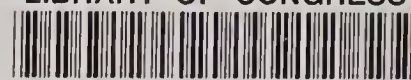
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